













*Benediction  
from  
The President, Ramkrishna Math and Mission*



*my blessings on The Prabuddha  
Bharata in its new form. may Swamiji's  
message reach through it a wider  
public.*

*The math. Belur  
Date 19<sup>th</sup> Dec 1928*

*Shivananda*



# Prabuddha Bharata

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“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।”

“Arise! Awake! And stop not till the Goal is reached.”

## UNPUBLISHED LETTERS OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

V

(To an Englishman)

New York,  
24th April 1895.

. . . . I am perfectly aware that although some truth underlies the mass of mystical thought which has burst upon the Western world of late, it is for the most part full of motives unworthy or insane. For this reason, I have never had anything to do with these phases of religion, either in India or elsewhere, and mystics as a class are not very favourable to me. . . .

I quite agree with you that only the Advaita Philosophy can save mankind, whether in East or West, from ‘devil worship’ and kindred superstitions, giving tone and strength to the very nature of man. India herself requires this, quite as much or even more than the West. Yet it is hard uphill work, for we have first to create a taste, then teach, and lastly proceed to build up the whole fabric.

Perfect sincerity, holiness, gigantic intellect, and an all-conquering will. Let only a handful of men work with these, and the whole world will be revolutionised. I did a good deal of platform work in this country last year, and received plenty of applause, but found out that I was only working for myself. It is the patient upbuilding of character, the intense struggle to realise the truth, which alone will tell, in the future of humanity. So this year I am hoping to work along this line—training up to practical Advaita realisation a small band of men and women. I do not know how far I shall succeed. The West is the field for work, if a man wants to benefit humanity, rather than his own particular sect or country. I agree perfectly as to your idea of a magazine. But I have no business capacity at all, to do these things. I can teach, and preach, and sometimes write. But I have intense faith in Truth. The Lord will send help and hands to work with me. Only let me be perfectly pure, perfectly sincere, perfectly unselfish.

“Truth alone triumphs, not untruth; through truth alone stretches the way to the Lord” (Yajur Veda). He who gives up the little self for the world will find the whole universe his. . . . I am very uncertain about coming to England. I know no one there, and here I am doing some work. The Lord will guide, in His own time.

## VI

(To an Englishman)

New York,  
(Undated).

"Truth alone triumphs, not untruth. Through truth alone lies the way to *Devayanam* (the way to God)." Those who think that a little sugar-coating of untruth helps the spread of truth, are mistaken, and will find in the long run that a single drop of poison poisons the whole mass. . . . The man who is pure and who dares, does all things. May the Lord ever protect you from illusion and delusion! I am ever ready to work with you, and the Lord will send us friends by the hundred, if only we be our own friends first. "The Atman alone is the friend of the Atman."

Europe has always been the source of social, and Asia, of spiritual power; and the whole history of the world is the tale of the varying combinations of these two powers. Slowly a new leaf is being turned, in the story of humanity. The signs of this are everywhere. Hundreds of new plans will be created and destroyed. Only the fit will survive, and what, but the true and the good, is the fit?

## VEDANTA IN BRAZIL

BY INDU BHUSAN CHATTERJEE, B. L.

"Up, India, and conquer the world with your spirituality."

As Ekalavya of the *Mahabharata* without the knowledge of Dronacharya set up his image in the forest, adopted him as his Guru and thus acquired skill in archery, so to our surprise we find the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda ideas manifesting and developing in distant Brazil without any effort on the part of the Ramakrishna Order or India. But the light walketh, the truth revealeth and the Lord worketh out his own path.

In Brazil they have a monthly journal in Portuguese called *O Pensamento* which in English means *The Thought*. It is published from Rua Rodrigo Silva, No. 40, São Paulo. Mr. A. O. Rodrigues is the editor of the journal. They have also a Society named *Circulo Esotérico da Comunhão de Pensamento*, which is devoted to the study of Science, Philosophy and other higher branches of knowledge. They sent out a representative to India before 1900 and the propagation of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda idea in Brazil had its beginning in his studies and observations.

*The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* and Swami Vivekananda's *Raja Yoga* were translated into Portuguese in 1909 with the permission of the Vedanta Society of U. S. A. and were published by the above-mentioned Society (*Circulo Esotérico etc.*). In the Spiritualist Temple of the *Circulo Esotérico etc.* the picture of Swami Vivekananda has been installed between those of the "Masters," and as Mr. Rodrigues informs us, the Swami is dearly loved by the entire membership of the *Circulo Esotérico etc.*, numbering 43,000 men and women. He further tells us that these members "have the perfect notion of the life and ideas of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda." He has kindly sent us a picture of Swami Vivekananda, which they have printed there.

From the journal *O Pensamento* it is found that the lives and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda have been made special subjects of

study by many, and quotations are often made from their sayings. Its pages are teeming with Vedantic ideas and extracts from the Gita. Mr. Rodrigues writes that Vedantic ideas are much loved by the Brotherhood (*Circulo Esotorico etc.*), because the truer—spiritual—independence is a supreme need of the human mind and “the Vedantic ideal offers a promising key to this independence on this physical plane.”

Mr. Miguel Karl of the Brotherhood came to India in 1926, impelled by a desire for Realisation, and resided in Darjeeling for a year, practising Yoga under the guidance of Swami Yogananda Saraswati. In his new book *O Espiritualismo na India E a Philosophia Vendanta* he devotes a chapter to Swami Vivekananda and has given a short history of the Ramakrishna Mission.

Awake, arise, India, the world is looking up to you for guidance. The trumpet call of Swami Vivekananda has reached the distant shores of the Amazon, and they have turned their attention to the spiritual treasures of India.\*

## LEST WE FORGET

BY THE EDITOR

### 1

For some time past, we have felt the necessity of facing a very delicate question. An answer to it cannot be delayed any longer. The question is: In what relation does India stand to the West in spiritual achievements? Is India spiritually superior to the West? Or is she only an equal or even inferior? Much depends on what we can answer to it. Whenever we have urged on our countrymen to hark back and adhere to our eternal ideals, the unvoiced retort has come to us: “If in spite of your efforts through thousands of years, you are spiritually no better than the West,—and materially you are evidently inferior,—what is the use of sticking to religion? Better follow the policy of the West. You may thereby reach equality with the West, as Japan is doing. At least you will have some earthly prosperity.” We know this is the voice of despair and is not seriously meant. If we can be assured that in spiritual matters at least, we stand superior to other nations, we may yet

keep our faith in our spiritual ideals intact and face all situations with a courageous heart. For surely, surely, no Indian is so fallen yet as not to feel the superior value of spirituality. Our own answer we may give at once: We earnestly believe that India is superior to the West in spirituality. We know there would be a chorus of protest against our answer from some quarters. But that would be because the protestors do not know what spirituality really is.

The past year has been one of strife and struggle for us,—not external, but mental. As our readers may have noted, last year our efforts were mainly concentrated on fighting certain harmful ideas that had been gaining gradual currency in India. India has no end of troubles. In all departments of her life, new problems have been continually cropping up. The political and economical struggles alone would have been enough for her. But unfortunately, even some of her fundamentals are being called in question. “Indian culture is

\* We are informed that there is a Vedanta Society in Buenos Aires in Argentina, and that some books of Swami Vivekananda have been translated into Spanish and published in Argentina and Chile, S. America.—Ed.



no good. Let religion go. The less of it, the better. Look at the West, how she is prospering untrammelled by religion."—So some have been preaching, and they are Indians themselves. We had to fight these ideas according to our light and capacity. We find them wrong and harmful. They are misleading and may lead India astray, if not properly checked.

It is not in a vain-glorious mood that we are trying to prove the spiritual superiority of India. No nation can live and grow without some unique achievements to her credit. We are not speaking here of essentially commercial nations who have no distinctive culture of their own and whose main energies are given to acquiring earthly prosperity. A nation's real worth lies in her culture. It is culture that gives precedence to a nation. If India is to occupy a prominent position in the assembly of nations, she has to make unique contributions to the culture and civilisation of humanity. Of course, she has some unique achievements already to her credit, which the world admires highly. But all those belong mainly to her past. The world is tardy and reluctant to expect any modern contributions from India. No nation, however, can long trade on her past. India also cannot. What then can she contribute in the present age? Does she possess anything which the world does not possess? Can she give anything for which the world is yearning? Our art, science, literature, economics, social polity, all these have their uniqueness. But they are not enough to earn the gratitude of the world. The rest of the world has enough of art, science, etc. If India's secular achievements are attracting the admiration of the world, it is because of the spiritual conception that underlies and tinges them. The spiritual vision, of which only a glimpse is reflected in our art, science, etc., that the world wants in a full and living form. A few sparks are not enough to earn the special recognition and homage

of mankind. A flood of light is wanted. Where can we get it if not in Indian spirituality? The treasures of spirituality the world is eagerly looking for. Religion, then, should be our special contribution to the civilisation of the world. We have therefore to specially emphasise this aspect of our national life. This will be our bulwark in the days of depression and struggle,—the thought that we also have some unique attainments to our credit. This is *Śraddhā*. Without this *Śraddhā*—self-respect and self-confidence—we shall be spineless and grovel in the dust, and be at the mercy of chance forces. That is why we are so eager to claim spiritual superiority for India. We feel the urgent necessity of this *Śraddhā* for the upliftment of the Indian nation.

This is not, however, the only reason. We hold that without a spiritual basis, the edifice of the Indian nation cannot be built. Religion is the one source, from which unlimited power can be drawn for the tremendous work that lies before India. That is also the one bond of unity, and the one trumpet call that can galvanise the sleeping masses. But before and in order that we can regain ourselves, it is absolutely necessary that we should have faith in our national heritage and pride in our achievements. The question of questions is therefore: Are we really more advanced spiritually than other nations? Do we know and possess more spirituality than the West? This question requires a clear and convincing reply.

## II

But at the very outset of our reply we are faced with a consideration. Suppose that India is spiritually superior. But can she contribute spirituality to the other nations of the world? Spirituality is an inner thing. It must grow of itself within every man's heart. It cannot be given by one man to another. Wherever there is spirituality

it is an independent growth directly from the heart of God ;—it has not been transposed from one country to another.—Such is the argument. Is it a correct one? If it be, then in spite of superiority, India cannot make any spiritual contribution to the world. To earn other nations' gratitude and respect, she will have to offer grosser things than spirituality,—art, science, literature, mechanisms, etc. The argument, however, is only specious. It is not quite true. First of all, it is wrong to think that spirituality cannot be given. Swami Vivekananda repeatedly declared that spirituality can be given, just as a flower or any other tangible object can be given by one to another. Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda did give spirituality in this way, and the receivers felt clearly and intensely that they had received spirituality. It is true that spirituality is a relation between the individual soul and God. But God is also in every man. And if any one has his spiritual powers sufficiently developed, he can surely rouse up Divinity in others. All great spiritual masters have done this, and their disciples also have done this in lesser degrees. Secondly, what is spiritual help? It is often supposed that since God is everywhere and the Eternal is already within us, it is an easy task to make one's way to God. Such, alas, is not the case. God is nearest to us. He is everywhere. But he alone knows why he has so hidden himself. He dwells in the centre of an extremely complex labyrinth. He does not want himself to be easily found out. Mysterious are the ways of God. We can know his ways from those who have known him intimately. Sri Ramakrishna tells us that God does not want that men should know him easily, for, then they will no longer help to continue the world by propagation and worldly activities, and God very much wants that this creation, his *lila*, should continue. Any way, it is certain that the way to God is not an open, straight

road, but very narrow and complex. This path one can scarcely find by one's own efforts. The experience of India for the past many thousand years has been that without an experienced and skilful teacher, it is almost impossible for a man to find his way to God, so much so that *Guruvāda* is now recognised as an integral part of spiritual wisdom. The reasons are not difficult to find. One mistake that most are apt to make is to conceive some supermundane sphere as the goal of life's attainments. Most people take heaven as the goal of religion. The old heavens may not satisfy them now. But new heavens do,—the heavens of the occultists, spiritualists and theosophists. They talk of this plane and that plane, of the peculiar beings and departed spirits that dwell thereon. These new conceptions are infectious. They seem so cogent, so satisfying. This, however, is not spirituality. That way God cannot be found. We may succeed in discovering new worlds, just as we may discover some new island or an unknown part of a country. But neither the one nor the other is in any sense spiritual. On the other hand, such curiosity is a great obstruction to spiritual knowledge. Many people have their spiritual progress stopped by it. Expert advice and guidance would be extremely helpful here. Then there is the mind, so complex, so elusive and so hard to understand and control. There are subtle worlds, subtle beings and subtle forms of internal and external nature. Real spirituality consists in cutting one's way through all these, transcending them, and becoming united and identified with the Spirit that is beyond matter and mind. But is such a straight course easy to take? Many are the distractions and temptations that beset the path of the aspirant. Our mind is extremely susceptible to them. Even the paltry riches of the earth are enough to turn our heads. We are very easily led away from our ideals by the prospects of earthly gains and enjoy-

ments. The attractions of the supermundane worlds are a thousand, thousand times more strong and tempting. Is it easy to withstand them? Here again expert advice is necessary. Otherwise slightest mistakes may ruin our spiritual career and set back our progress by several lives. That is why the Upanishad has declared that this path is difficult to tread and as sharp as the blade of a razor. Only an absolute steadiness of balance, without the slightest inclination to any direction, can make it possible for any one to cross over. This caution cannot be learnt by oneself. It may be said that one will learn it through experience. Alas, we are so constituted, so thick is the veil laid on our soul by *Māyā*, that we do not remember what we experienced in our past lives. How then can we hope to profit by experience, if the experience is clean gone from our memory? We have to profit by others' experience. Another stumbling block is that we are often apt to take a stage on the way as the ultimate goal itself. Until one has realised God, one cannot at all conceive the nature of God-realisation. A slight change in our mind, a most hazy glimpse of the Infinite, in fact, a slight loosening of the bonds, often make us think that we have already reached the goal. That is why, in these days, any man, of even slightly extraordinary nature and attainments, is acclaimed as a *Rishi*, a sage. Those who know smile at such childishness. God-realisation is not so cheap. A tremendous change in the present condition of our mind is necessary before we can approach the feet of God. This required change is so profound and revolutionary that the worldly man, however intellectual he may be, is quite incapable of conceiving it. It is no wonder that he will be apt to look upon any one who is only slightly above him as a spiritual master. Even the *Sādhakas* are easily misled. Perhaps through hard struggle their mind has reached a state of partial

calmness. This calmness seems so different from the habitually turbulent state of the mind, that they are misled to think that they have reached the state of highest beatitude. Calmness, light and joy, all these when they first dawn on us easily mislead. We are always so eager to reach the destination and have done with the strenuous journey, that our very expectations often delude us. Then again, who can count the vagaries of the mind? Strange shapes it will take as it will be sought to be moulded into a desired form; and we would be scarcely able to make any head or tail of them. Only expert guidance then can help us out.

So we see that the facile idea that since God is in every heart, spirituality will grow of itself without external help, has little practical value. We rather find that whereas in other matters, material and intellectual, outside help can be sometimes dispensed with with impunity, in spiritual matters, the help of a teacher is absolutely necessary. Without the spiritual teacher, little progress is possible. It may be asked here: Who was the first teacher in India? How did he acquire his spiritual knowledge? To this the answer of the Hindu scriptures is clear, though it may not convince the modern sceptic. The Upanishads, *Purāṇas* and *Tantras*, all that describe spiritual wisdom, are unanimous in their assertion that originally this knowledge was imparted to men by God himself. Not to ordinary men. Those men were specially created by God to be the bearers of spiritual wisdom to mankind. Even now such messengers come to the world from time to time; they are called *Avatāras* (Divine Incarnations). However that may be, it is certain that *practically* the majority of mankind have to seek help of their enlightened brothers in gaining spiritual wisdom. It is true that what we gained in our past lives remain in our mind as *Samskāras* (impressions and tendencies). It is also true that under favourable circumstances and at a slight

inspiration, they can flash in our mind and become active again. But from this it must not be inferred that all spiritual wisdom will be thus manifest in our mind. Only the already acquired return to us so easily. But all new advance has to be made through bitter struggle. And that struggle, as we have seen above, can become fruitful only through the advice and co-operation of an illumined teacher.

India, therefore, can help the world greatly if she has any real spiritual wisdom in her. Only those Indians who are rich in spiritual experience, would be able to render the greatest help. But minor help can be given even by less qualified Indians. They may teach the difference between spirituality and mere psychic inquisitiveness; they may propound the philosophy of spirituality; they may teach the rationale of spiritual development; and they may demonstrate by their own practice the qualifications of spiritual life. Guidance in all these the world urgently needs, and it is our conviction that India can furnish that guidance. And nothing would be a greater service than this. We may serve others physically and mentally. We may heal their body or impart intellectual, secular knowledge to them. But these are only temporarily beneficial to men. The lasting good is spiritual. Whoever does that good earns eternal gratitude and the highest, even worshipful, regard. India has done that service to most Asiatic countries in the past ages. Is she going to render a similar service to the West in the present age? We hope and believe, she is.

### III

For, as we have stated at the very beginning, it is our conviction that India is spiritually superior to the other races of the world. How do we know it? But what is spirituality? To most of us it is a vague expression; and it is thus often fancifully interpreted.

We have seen above how differently it is conceived by people through their errors or proclivities. We have also hinted at its true significance. *It is the consciousness of oneself as pure spirit, devoid of and beyond body and mind, and feeling and acting accordingly.* We feel ourselves almost wholly as the body. We feel ourselves as mind also, —the lower mind. And behind the body- and mind-consciousness, looms vaguely the consciousness of a transcendent entity which is the real spirit. But this consciousness is so faint and indefinable that the moment we try to clarify it, it eludes us. The reason is obvious. In our present condition, any such clarification can only be a mental effort: we try to define the Atman, the spirit, with the mind. But mind is limited, it is essentially material, unconscious. How can it perceive the spirit? So what happens when we try to know our self is that we feel ourselves as body or a mode of mind. We do not feel ourselves as pure spirit. To be truly spiritual, therefore, we have to master the secret of transcending body and mind and know ourselves as spirit. This is spirituality, this is spiritual wisdom. It requires long practice, lasting through many lives. It requires eradication of desires; it requires absolute concentration of the mind. Only thus can we transcend the limitations of mind and matter and establish ourselves in our real, eternal state. When we have reached that state, we feel ourselves as absolutely separate from the body and mind, like a sword in its sheath or a dry nut within its shell. Of course, in the transcendental state we do not even feel the existence of the mind and body and the world. But when we descend from that high state, we begin to feel their existence; but the consciousness of the essential separateness of ourselves from body and mind is never lost. Henceforth our thinking, feeling and action are no longer like the ordinary man's. The world is now transfigured for us. The

common man's motives no longer impel our thoughts and actions. Our thoughts and actions now partake of the nature of Divine thoughts and actions. We are now above death ; we feel it moving much below us like a dark cloud seen from the summit of a high mountain. Such is spirituality. It is nothing short of or unlike it. Those who deny the spiritual superiority of India, have often a vague idea of the nature of spirituality. One Indian gentleman who is proud of having wandered all over the world, and is at present busy trying to destroy the present India in order to build an India after his own heart, and who proclaims from time to time in a strident voice that the salvation of India lies only in imitating the West, once declared that Europeans are also as spiritual as Indians, because they also believe in going to church and have faith in priests, saints and prayers. Evidently the gentleman has not yet learnt to separate the grain from the chaff. Another Indian gentleman, living in London, once wrote to a Calcutta daily that the English are more spiritual than Indians, because the London policemen are so capable and the English people so energetic. Here also is the same confusion of ideas. Even Indian school and college boys now give vent to their infantile ideas about spirituality in the daily press and pass the complacent judgment that India is not more spiritual than the West. All these opinions are not, however, worthy of serious attention.

But lately Rabindranath Tagore also expressed an almost similar view in an article which was published in *The Modern Review*, December. In that article, comparing the East with the West, Rabindranath observes that it is true that the principal relations of Europe with Asia are those of exploitation, and that this exploitation is inspired by materialism and that the ruthless hunger of that materialism is unappeasable. It is ever on the in-

crease spreading its imperialistic and industrial tentacles all over the earth. It is a blood-sucker. Whoever comes in contact with it, is anguished and debased. It is magnificently efficient, but it does not draw our adoration ; it frightens and destroys, it cannot claim our homage. This is the Europe that is most prominently figuring before the eyes of Asia. But Rabindranath does not believe that that is the whole nature of Europe. Europe has another side in which she is truly spiritual. It is true she has lost faith in religion, but not in humanity. Tagore believes that in Europe the ideals of human activity are truly spiritual ; for these ideals are not paralysed by shackles of scriptural injunctions, or, to put it in other words, their sanction lies in the heart of man and not in something external to him. In Europe man is pouring forth his life for knowledge, for the land of his birth and in the service of humanity, through the urge of his innate ideals. It is this attitude of mind which is essentially spiritual. True spirituality gives us freedom. The soul of Europe is not recognising any limitation to its capacities ; it denies the insurmountability of nature's laws and defies death, the fear of which nature has instilled into every heart. Thus in the European mind materialism and spirituality are equally prominent. The two are ever fighting each other and spirituality is never acknowledging defeat. In short, the whole nature of man is awake in Europe, for in man there are both the materialist and the spiritualist.

Such is Tagore's estimation of Europe. His words deserve careful consideration. But a tree is known by its fruits. If there is indeed so much spirituality in Europe, how is it that her contact with other peoples is so devastating? How is it that whenever her politicians desire to enslave Oriental nations, entire nations march out in jubilation? Where does her spirituality go then? Why did the nations of Europe so gallantly fly at each other's

throat and are even now preparing enthusiastically for another Armageddon? It is not a small and isolated section of people merely, that was and is responsible for this state of things. The bulk of the Western nations were and are behind it. We do not at all mean that there are not fine spiritual souls in the West. There are. But they are in a hopeless minority and their life and ideas do not much impress the Westerners. The overwhelming majority of people do not tend towards spirituality. They are pre-eminently material and intellectual.

That our estimation of present-day Europe is not wrong is borne out by C. F. Andrews in a letter which he wrote to the Indian press a few months ago. In it he says:

"The West has now become far more hardened and materialistic than it was before. It has thrown aside all the sentiment that was prevalent in the earlier days, some 8 or 12 years ago and has settled down to hard business. I found in France the strongest spirit of economy everywhere prevailing, and at the same time a determination to raise the standard of living to the highest degree of comfort and enjoyment, at the expense of other people. Undoubtedly the people of Europe have become more absorbed in gaining wealth than ever before.

"When the Poet Rabindranath Tagore was in Europe in 1920 to 1921, he received everywhere a reception which would only be compared to that of a great monarch or a great prophet. His words were listened to with eager and rapt attention, and he was asked on every side to give the message of the East which should help the West in its hour of darkest despair.

"Now, however, the glamour of those days has passed, and the West has again, become fully self-satisfied and eagerly industrious. It is determined that there is no other way of immediate salvation except by material means and through material resources. Each country is striving to the utmost of its capacity to get rich, and this means very hard work and laborious days spent in the office or the workshop, while when the work is over pleasure begins its round far into the late hours of the night. The life that I saw when crossing the Con-

tinental and also in London itself, where I am now residing, is one incessant toil both of pleasure and business. The whole of the day and a large part of the night are taken up either in enjoyment or in earning money. Very little leisure is left over for either sleep or rest or meditation.

"It is a strangely different life to-day from that which is being led in the East. In the East the pace of modern life such as is experienced in London or Paris has become quite impossible, and climatic conditions would render such a life unbearable, but apart from these factors the soul of the people of India would revolt against such an emptiness of spiritual aim and endeavour.

"To me personally, after a quarter of a century of Indian experience, this Western life has become intolerable because of the speed and haste and vanity, for surely man was not intended by God merely to race through day after day his existence without any further end in view than to make money and to spend it. Surely God never intended man or woman to go through the whole length of days and nights without one thought of Eternity or of the deeper things of the soul. Even though the East may remain comparatively poor in earthly riches compared with the rapidly growing wealth of the West, yet the East has not lost the pearls of great price, namely, the inner life of the soul.

"It is true that in the West itself all good people are at one in lamenting this rush and hurry of modern existence. All good people cry out at the futility of the modern life of pleasure without any spiritual end in view, but all the same those who cry out against it become themselves involved in it and their ceaseless lamentation is without effect.

"What will be the end? It is difficult to see where the present haste and luxury are leading, but it is clear at least that when the West has learnt to the full the bitterness of the course on which it is proceeding to-day it will turn once more to the East with a greater seriousness than before; and when that time comes the East will need to have its own message clear and true and be able at the same time to sympathise with the difficulties and trials of the West."

The fact is what Tagore considers as spirituality of the European mind is not really spirituality but mainly physical courage, intellectualism and moral

idealism. It is the lure of ideas, not of spiritual realities. Materialistic people are strongly attracted by material, concrete things and the joys derived from them. They run mad-like after them. Those of a higher plane are intellectual. For them ideas have a similar attraction. When a scientist devotes his life and energy to the acquisition of knowledge, it is not spirituality, but intellectualism. When people work for humanity, that is also predominantly ideal and therefore intellectual and moral, *unless* they look upon men as God himself and seek to obliterate the human aspect of humanity. When exploration parties fly to North and South Poles with every prospect of death before them, the motive power is intellectual and not spiritual. When Westerners laughingly launch into hair-raising adventures, the impulse is not spiritual, but the joy of the realisation of physical and mental strength. Intellectualism is impatient of obstruction. It runs mad-like after ideas. But mere intellectualism cannot produce that emotional attitude to which the whole world appears suffused with Divine radiance. That is why we find that in spite of great intellectual development in the West, the Western peoples cannot overcome conflict either among themselves or with other nations. Intellectualism affects only the surface of the mind ; it does not go deep enough. It may prove either good or evil according as it is used. Like material power, intellectual power also can be either beneficial or harmful. The only certain and sovereign good is spiritual. For the acquisition of that a different mental training is necessary than physical courage, intellectualism or moral idealism, and quite a different attitude towards life and the world. And that training India has been giving to her children through immemorial ages, and here lies her superiority to the West.

The difference between spirituality and intellectualism lies in the fact that

whereas intellectual quests have no necessary reference to an ultimate reality, spirituality can never subsist without recognising an eternal existence, called God (realised as either person, superperson or absolute), who is considered as all in all, the one object of heart's desire, in whose realisation the world is lost for ever, and therefore, in our efforts for whose realisation, we continually try to negate and forget the world of phenomena. The one great distinctive feature of religion or spirituality is that in it our whole being yearns for God as a *person*, not as an *idea*. The relation and motive are pre-eminently emotional and not intellectual, as when a man seeks for his lost beloved. It is our heart, our entire personality that is engrossed in the search ; and the object of this search is not conceived as an idea, however noble and great, but essentially as a person, to whom we may relate ourselves emotionally in various ways. The other distinctive feature which derives naturally from this is that in one form or another the validity and value of the world are wholly denied and negated. The monist will categorically deny them ; the dualist will virtually deny them, though not theoretically, for the world as it exists, with its manifold phenomena and interests, will have no attraction or use for him when he will realise God. Thus a whole-souled yearning for God and a denial of the universe are the distinguishing features of spirituality. Do the enterprises of the European mind to which Tagore refers, possess these characteristics? Does the mentality of the West tend towards them? We do not think they do. Hence we consider them as not spiritual, but only intellectual and moral. Not all kinds of freedom are spiritual. That freedom alone, in which there is no consciousness of the world and its interests, is spiritual. It is dangerous and extremely misleading to infer spirituality from the existence of freedom. Even animals have

freedom. Where do we draw the line between animality and spirituality?

To spirituality, the world is non-existent, and only God exists whom we are to know, love and be united with. Neither service nor idealism has anything to do with it. Nor can a relation with the derivatives of God, as nationality and humanity are sometimes conceived to be, be considered spiritual. The relation must be *directly* with God, not indirectly and with none else. Only then will it be spirituality. To our ordinary consciousness, moral idealism, patriotism, philanthropy and philosophical quest appear supertine and we forget the great difference between them and spirituality. This difference is clearly felt only when we seek to realise God ourselves. We then find that the tendencies and motives that lie behind intellectual and moral idealism are far different from the longing and love that we should feel for God. That is not to say that such idealism cannot be utilised for the purpose of God-realisation. For that, spiritualisation is necessary through Karma Yoga or service of God in man. But in all cases, the objective is God and not man or the world. Swedenborg nicely draws out the distinction between morality and spirituality in these words: "Moral life is lived either for the sake of the Divine, or for the sake of men in the world. The moral life which is lived for the sake of the Divine is spiritual life; both appear alike in the external form, but in the internal they are altogether different. One saves man, the other does not save him; for he who lives a moral life for the sake of the Divine, is led by the Divine; but he who lives a moral life for the sake of men in the world, is led by himself."

#### IV

The main attempts of India have been devoted to making those two things which we have mentioned as the distinctive features of spirituality, real

in the life of her children. God is real, the world unreal; renunciation is the only way to Divine realisation: this is the burden of India's life-song. From very ancient times, India has been tirelessly teaching her children these supreme lessons by examples and precepts. Not only have the philosophy of them been expounded, but practical means also have been provided for their realisation. India has learnt the supreme art of the spiritualisation of life and experience. This is the secret of all spiritual achievement. Every moment of our life and experience has to be related to God. "All that is in this universe should be covered by God." We have to spiritualise our relationships with our dear ones, our parents, brothers, sisters, wife, children, friends. We have to look upon all men and beings as Divine. All actions have to be conceived as the worship of the Lord. And all efforts, thoughts, feelings, achievements, body, mind and soul have to be dedicated everyday at the feet of the Lord who is the only reality and truth. By such continued practice, from day to day, from life to life, do we at last attain the Supreme Illumination. This practice has been inbred into the very blood of the Indian people. It is always there, working sometimes consciously, sometimes subconsciously, even amongst the lower strata of society. Some may have been neglecting the practice in the present times, being demoralised by Western contact. But the masses still believe in it; the great religious bodies believe in it; and it lives very potent in the subconscious mind of entire India. Witness, for instance, the several national movements during the last two decades: all of them have sought, in one form or another, to spiritualise their political struggles. This is characteristic of India. Our national workers are many of them more or less religiously inclined; their centres of work are often *Ashramas*, with a religious atmosphere about them. This



habit of spiritualisation has achieved wonderful results in every age in India. This has made possible the birth of great saints even among most ignorant and neglected castes in India. The greatest spiritual giant of the modern age, Sri Ramakrishna, was born in a village which can scarcely be called cultured and enlightened. Yet not only was Sri Ramakrishna born and nurtured there, but his parents, relatives and some of his neighbours also were profoundly spiritual. Even ignorant village women were found to possess deep spiritual insight. How were these possible? Because the secrets of spirituality had been intensely propagated among all sections of Indians. The bulk of our people may be hide-bound by *Shāstras* and may not evince the apparently excellent freedom of thought existing in the West; but even the poor villagers of India enjoy a kind of freedom, to which even the mightiest intellectual freedom appears as bondage.

The habit of spiritualisation necessarily engenders the habit of symbolisation. Spiritualisation is possible only in cases where the spiritual reality contemplated already exists, though hidden from the ordinary vision. Thus we can spiritualise our relations with men and the world, because these attractions have at their root the attractions of God. "It is not for the sake of the husband that the husband is dear to the wife, but for the Self that is in the husband. It is not for the sake of the children that children are dear to their parents, but for the Self that is in them. It is not for the sake of money that money is dear to man, but for the Self that is in money. It is not for the worlds that the worlds are dear to men, but for the Self that is in the worlds." Why do we love the world? Because the world is really Divine, and our being cannot forget its essential unity with it. But when we come to the details of our everyday life, we cannot

easily spiritualise them. Here comes the need of symbolisation.

The world and its things become symbols of Divinity. This habit of symbolisation is deeply ingrained in the Indian nature. And in fact, without this habit, little spiritual progress is possible. The Indian mind revels in symbols. Symbols are not always imaginary. It almost seems as if God has made things in a symbolistic spirit, preserving amity between the higher and the lower creations. Every object is sought to assume a spiritual significance. The cultivator tilling his land is reminded of the other soil, his own life, which is lying untilled, and he sings: "O mind, thou knowest not the art of cultivation. The precious son of thy life is lying fallow; if thou wouldst cultivate it, it would yield a golden harvest." The house reminds him of his body and life which are also similarly constructed with a tenant, the soul, dwelling within. Boats, rivers, flowers, the seasons of the year, sports, kite-flying, well-sinking, everything reminds him of God. He has composed beautiful songs on things of everyday experience, and his sweet strains may any moment transport him to the very presence of God. Some of these songs\* can stand comparison with the best lyrics of the world by their beauty of idea and emotion, delicacy of expression and profundity of suggestion. To listen to them is to be convinced that the soul that expresses itself through them is full of genuine feeling and understanding, and that the symbolising and spiritualising tendency underlying them is no mechanical habit but a living and active principle.

Spiritualisation and symbolisation slowly wear away the crust that the world has formed round God. The world is negated and vanishes into nothingness. Along with these, is the third habit of mental concentration. This is considered obligatory on every

\* We hope to present our readers with some of them in a future issue of P. B.

one. Every Hindu has to learn and practise it in one form or another from an early age. Concentration withdraws the mind from outer objects and multifarious thoughts, delete their existence for the time being and reveals the existence of the reality within. This daily practice, however imperfectly done, has a wonderful effect on the mind. The Indian nation has been taught to thus transpose the centre of gravity of her being and consciousness from the sensible to the very borderland of the supersensible. The spiritual realities are not far off, vague things to her, but tangible and real. Such a nation with such a training cannot live and behave like other nations. She must be somewhat supernormal and metaphysical. Such really India is.

### V

Are these features which we have described of India, also existent in the West? If so, in what degree? So far as we know, the West is pre-eminently lacking in them. That is why we consider India spiritually superior to the West. For, if the West were as spiritual as India, she would have necessarily developed those features. We do not forget the Christian mystics that have been born in Europe, nor do we forget the many devout Christians that still live there. But they have not been able to appreciably interpenetrate the Western mind with their spiritual illumination. One reason is that the predominant tendencies of the bulk of the Western people are other than spiritual; they are not easily susceptible to spiritual influences. Secondly, the interpretation of spirituality, the psychological explanation of spiritual experiences, has been lamentably lacking in the West, especially in the Middle Ages when alone there was a chance of spiritualising the mind of Europe. Though some attained to mystic realisations, they could not explain them rationally. They looked upon their supernatural

experiences as miracles, and not as actions of subtle laws. The practice of spirituality was made dismal: Christianity sat like a nightmare on the heart of Europe. Along with these, there was intolerable ecclesiastical corruption and tyranny. The mass mind of Europe, therefore, shook off Christianity and took to the sensible, the normal and the natural, —to science. Christianity was a great attempt in Europe to bring her to the spiritual view-point. That attempt succeeded only to a certain degree. That is why we find in the Middle Ages, in Christian traditions and in the Roman Catholic Church, some reflection, however distorted, of Indian spiritual outlook and experience. Modern Europe has not permitted that experiment to be continued. Now the dominating tendency of the Western mind is towards mechanisation and secularisation. We dealt with this tendency in our article this time last year. The West has not changed since then, nor does she mean to. In a book, recently published by Lonemans, named *Whither Mankind?*, to which some of the prominent thinkers of Europe and America have contributed chapters on the different aspects of Western civilisation, the writer on the religious aspect observes that the strong tendency in the West to-day is towards the secularisation of life and its concerns. Science is compelling that. The halo of sanctity has been dispersed from around all aspirations and institutions of men. Nothing is sacred and idealistic; everything is presented as matter-of-fact and realistic. The Indian tendency is quite opposite. Though we are feeling the need and urge of assimilating the material achievements of the West, our outmost effort is devoted to their spiritualisation. They are unclean until they have been clothed with the smile of God. Can the West ever attain to any spirituality until everything concerning her and her life has been rearranged in the garb of Divine light? We know her salvation lies in a religion

that is rational and scientifically explainable. India possesses such a religion, and that is another reason why we consider India spiritually superior to the West ;—India possesses a detailed knowledge and rationale of the psychological processes of spiritual experience. Spiritual experience does not appear to an Indian as a miracle but as the effect of supernatural laws. India knows the laws governing spiritual life and can rationally explain and teach them to others. We do not find ourselves in the sea in spiritual matters. Spurious articles cannot deceive us. The fundamental principles regulating spiritual struggles and attainments are known even to an ordinary villager. This knowledge has become instinctive with him. This intimacy with spiritual life and knowledge, the West needs urgently.

Do we mean by what we have described as the advantages of India that every Indian is spiritually superior to every Westerner, or that there are no great spiritual men in the present-day West, because the West as a whole lacks those advantages? Nothing of the kind. When we have to compare one people with another, we cannot judge by individual cases. The predominant tendencies of the nations have to be selected and compared. There are many Indians who are far from spiritual and there are many Westerners who are pre-eminently spiritual. But we do affirm that the dominant tendencies of the Indian mind is towards spirituality ; that Indians have been trying to make God real in their life to a much greater degree than other nations ; and that in India God is considered more real and desirable by the average man and woman than in the West. Here, even when one fails to live up to the spiritual ideals, one acknowledges clearly and sincerely that God is indeed the one and only object of life's searchings.

Such affirmation is certainly more in evidence in India than in the West. For this faith, India has always declared that nothing matters,—neither health nor wealth nor intellect ; through none of these can the Eternal be attained ; by their renunciation, by denying the manifold, do we reach the One. To-day we are face to face with the West with her different affirmation. It requires a very courageous heart to look the giant in the face and find that it is great only in magnitude, but not in essence. A strong, adamant faith in her ancient ideals is wanted in this crisis of India's history. Her greatest message is : God alone is real, the world is false. The highest duty of her children is to make this greatest fact real in their life. This is our one sure stand. All other achievements are secondary and ephemeral.

Lest in our present confusion, this is reduced to mere profession, and lest we lose the real in grasping at the shadow which the West is holding so alluringly before us, we must *practise* it, every one of us, every day of our life. Such practice alone can make religion and spiritual existences real to us. And then, even the grimest spectre on earth will not be able to shake us from our secure position. Without this we shall be at the mercy of every chance wind. To-day some are seeking to make art the goal of national activity. Others are after economic revolution. Others again are dreaming of an Indian edition of Bolshevism. All these are good in their legitimate places. But without the basis, the edifice cannot be constructed ; without the thread, the flowers cannot be wreathed. Therefore India must hearken above all to the supreme truth revealed to her, that God is the only thing worth seeking and the world does not matter. May we never fail to bear witness to this highest of all truths !

## NOTES OF CONVERSATION WITH SWAMI TURIYANANDA

[These notes are taken from the diary of a disciple, written by him while he was living with Swami Turiyananda and Swami S., another direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, at Almora in the Himalayas in the year 1915.]

7TH JUNE.

Swami S said: "One may have any amount of *Samādhi* and *dhyāna* (spiritual concentration), but one must never forget to love Him. What is the use of this life if one does not love Him?"

Swami T: "Yes, one is bound to admit that 'when one feels oneself as body, one must consider oneself as the servant of the Lord, when one thinks oneself as a *jīva*, a person, one must consider oneself as a part of Him, and when one feels oneself as the *Ātman*, Self, one is the same as the Lord Himself.'

"How can a man who runs for remedy at the slightest snoring, refuse to submit to the Lord?"

*Sri Rāmakrishna Kathamrita* (Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna) was being read. Swami T. observed:

"Dakṣiṇeswar was in those days as divine and blissful as *Kāuśika*.\* From morning till one in the afternoon, all were busy preparing for the worship of the Deities and then worshipping Them; while Sri Ramakrishna himself was always talking about God, and people sat spell-bound listening to him. The atmosphere vibrated with thoughts of God. Even his jokes and funs related to God and culminated in *Samādhi*. He would rest after the mid-day meal, but only for a short while. The rest of his day was given to discoursing about God. In the evening he would visit the Kali temple and there fan the Mother, and then return to his room reeling under divine intoxication. He would often ask those who practised *sādhana* if they felt a

kind of intoxication in the morning and evening. . . . At night there was scarcely any sleep for him. No sooner would he lie down than he would get up and rouse up all who slept in his room, saying, 'Do not sleep so much. Get up and meditate.' He would then lie down again and get up by early dawn and recite the names of God in his inimitably sweet voice. Others also would get up and sit down to *japa* and meditation. Now and then he would go up to them and correct their postures."

10TH JUNE.

Swami T: "In order to realise the Self, you have to mount the highest peak of renunciation."

11TH JUNE.

Swami T: "Is it easy to detach the mind from all objects? Only a hero can do that. The external objects are ever trying to enter your mind and conquer you. In the mind itself there are many layers, one upon another. It is no use merely closing the eyes and ears."

13TH JUNE.

Swami T: "X wants to finish studying *Rāja Yoga* quickly. But we poured out our very life in this quest. We have been doing this ever since our memory began. Yet even now the mind has not been purified. There are still attachment and hatred in it. . . . O Lord, make me the servant of the servant of Thy servant!

"Egoism is no good; it is extremely pernicious. Egoism is like drinking wine, it betrays sense. The Master

\* The celebrated abode of Shiva.

used to say that water can accumulate only in a low land. Only in humility the good qualities of the mind and heart become manifest. Pride always holds the head high. That which is elastic and unbreakable like steel, that indeed is strength. He alone is strong, who can live in harmony with different natures in a spirit of amicable compromise.

"Make yourself forever His, then there will be no more fear. Swamiji (Vivekananda) used to say: 'If you have been born on earth, leave a lasting mark on it.' At the Baranagore Math he said: 'Let me tell you, our names will be recorded in history.' Swami Yogananda ridiculed him. But Swamiji replied: 'Well, well, you will see. I can convince every one of the truths of Vedanta. If you will not listen to me, I shall go to the Pariah villages and teach Vedanta to them.'

"If you want to preach, you must also *give* something. Preaching is not merely lecturing to a class or explaining a book. You have to *give* them something. Therefore you must accumulate spirituality beforehand. . . . And never pride yourself on having gained control over the passions of the mind. If you do, they will at once raise their heads. Ever pray to Him: 'O Lord, save me from them.'

"There are several obstructions to concentration: *laya*, *vikshepa*, *kashāya*, *rasāswāda* and *shama*. *Laya* is the mind being overcome by *tamas* (inertia),—mind falls into sleep and loses consciousness. Most *sādhakas* are held down by *laya*. *Vikshepa* is the scattering of the mind on multifarious objects. *Kashaya* is finding meditation distasteful,—one feels disinclined to meditate. But one must still persist. *Rasaswada* is the mind being fascinated by the vision of divine forms and refusing to ascend higher. *Shama* is the equilibrium, balance, of the mind; in this

state also the mind refuses to go forward. . . . Passions will last so long as the body lasts. But through His grace they cannot raise their heads."

15TH JUNE.

Swami T: "It is no good merely working. Work is drudgery if there is no spiritual feeling behind it."

16TH JUNE.

Sri Ramakrishna Kathamrita was read. In one passage Sri Ramakrishna was mentioned as saying: "It is not true that He can be realised through work. But through unselfish work grows the eager longing to realise Him. This eager longing draws down His grace and then man realises Him."

Apropos of this, Swami T said: "A little casual reading of the scriptures and a little meditation are not enough to realise the Lord. You must yearn to see Him. The heart must pant and pine for Him. The Master said to us: 'It is because I had such intense longing for the Mother that She gave me every convenience,—She gave me this Kali Temple and Mathur Babu.\* If there is sincere longing for God, everything becomes favourable.'

"There is no other way than *Bhakti*."

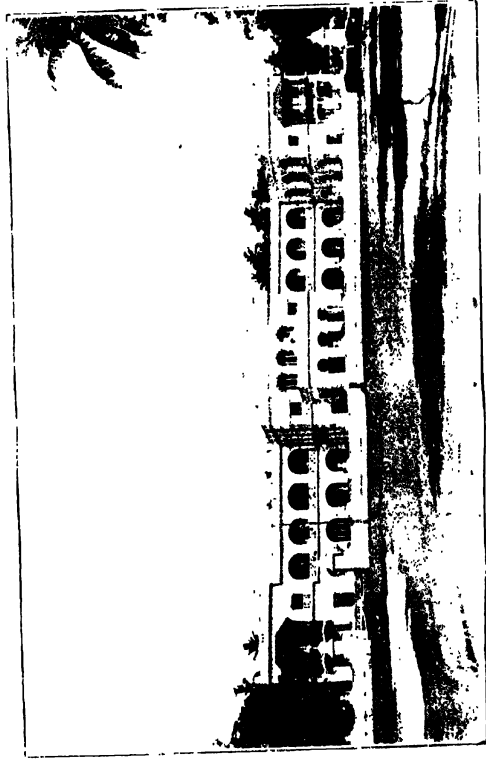
Swami S: "Quite true. Meditate on His lotus-feet; the senses will close of themselves and the mind will lose itself in Him. Ramprasad says in a song that devotion is at the root of all spiritual achievements. Ramprasad was in a sense the ideal of Sri Ramakrishna. The Master said: 'Mother, Thou hast revealed Thyself to Ramprasad; why shouldst Thou not to me?' The Master's teaching is *Bhakti* tempered by *Jñāna*."

20TH JUNE.

Swami T: "When will that day come when the very utterance of the name of God will bring tears to my

\* Son-in-law of Rani Rasmani, foundress of the Temple. He served the Master with great devotion and proved helpful to him in many respects during his *sadhana*.





Students' Home in 1905  
The Present Students' Home



V. T. '00 Technical Institute  
The Residential High School

eyes?" (*To the disciple*) Do you cry when you take His name? Ah, what a supernal condition! Just consider! —The very utterance of His name makes you cry!"

*Swami S:* "When I first used to go to the Master, I would often feel inclined to cry. One night I cried much on the river side near the *Vakul-talā*. Just at that time the Master in his room was enquiring where I had gone. When I returned to him, he asked me to sit down and said: 'The Lord is greatly pleased if one cries to Him. The tears of love wash away all mental impurities accumulated through the ages. It is very good to cry to God.'

"Another day I was meditating in the *Panchavati*. My concentration became very deep. Just then the Master came towards me from the side of *Jhāu-talā*. As soon as he looked at me, I burst out crying. The Master stood still. I felt something creeping up inside my bosom and I was overcome by an irrepressible fit of shaking. The Master remarked that this crying was not for nothing, it was a sort of ecstasy. I then followed him to his room where he gave me something to eat. The awakening of *Kundalini*\* was an easy matter for him. He could do this even without touching, by merely standing near by."

## THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION STUDENTS' HOME, Mylapore, Madras

By A VISITOR

### I

"Few people of the world have such ardent longing for education as the Indian. They are willing to endure any hardship to get it. I saw boys go hungry and cold for it, and widowed mothers deny themselves food and all the necessities of life that their sons might procure it. To help such boys is one of the most favoured forms of charity in India. Many students go through their preparatory and University courses without touching money. One gentleman lets them sleep on his verandah or in his house, another gives them their clothes, a third their books, and for tuition they earn a scholarship. There are families who stint themselves their modest daily meal to share it with one or two students."

In these words Sister Devamata, an American lady who lived in India for over ten years and had thus got an

intimate knowledge of Indian life at first hand, poignantly tells the story of students who are votaries at the temple of learning. Such generous voluntary assistance is not uncommon, but yet there are a very large number who fail to get help and even those who do get such support, lead a difficult life, as they are left to starve if the gentleman who helps them leaves the place or finds it impossible to continue his aid.

In order to help such students, the Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home in Madras was started by a few sincere men who joined together to do in an organized manner what they could. Begun in 1905, the institution has now gained a name for efficient service rendered to such students as are both intelligent and poor. And now when one sees a brilliant student in South India unable to pursue his studies for want of funds, some one suggests "Why

\* *Kundalini*—"coiled-up," the spiritual power lying dormant in *Mulādhāra* at the bottom of the spine, which when roused, forces its way to the brain, when man attains the realisation of the Transcendental Reality.



don't you apply for admission into the Ramakrishna Students' Home?"

An attempt is made in this brief article to describe the history and the present working of the institution, which has been hailed by those who know as the largest and one of the best conducted educational institutions managed by the Ramakrishna Mission. I venture to hope that a perusal of such an account will not only inspire readers to found similar institutions but also fill them with a desire to visit and render all possible aid to such deserving Homes. For, to the Hindu no *dana* (gift) is greater than *Anna dana* (feeding the hungry); but *Vidya dana* (the gift of learning) is still greater as it enables the recipient not only to gain food for the body but also for the mind and the soul.

I have before me the Reminiscences of the Secretary of the Home, where in simple but forceful language he narrates the circumstances that led to its establishment. I shall summarise what he says therein :

Swami Ramakrishnananda was one of the first to recognise the greatness of Sri Ramakrishna and become his disciple. Later, when the Mission was started, he came over to Madras as the first President of that centre. Here came to him many young men eager to seek knowledge ; several of them were students, steeped in poverty, but with a burning zeal for study and service. In his intimate talks with them, the Swami learnt how hard the lot of many of these young men was ; and his heart ever generous, yearned to do something for them.

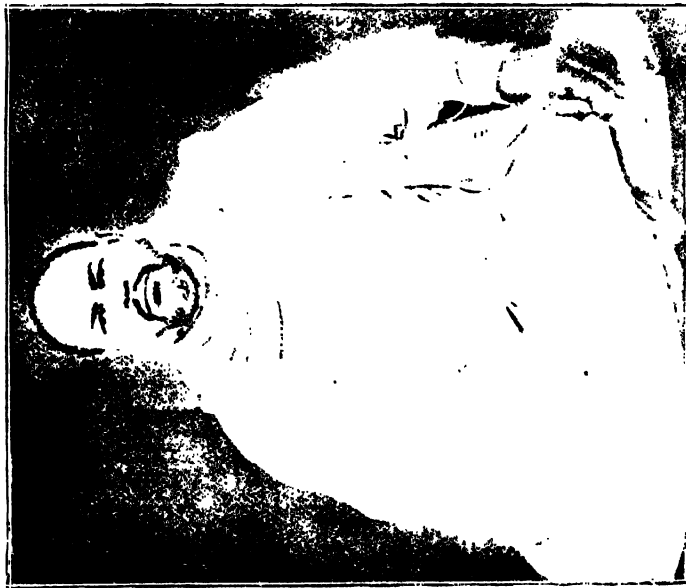
Early in 1905, one of his young disciples brought to his notice the harrowing tales of suffering of four boys from Guntur. Swami Ramakrishnananda at once set about finding means to give them food and shelter. The Swami appointed a small committee to find the wherewithal to run the Home. Three more students joined and the Home was started in a small rented building. A

cook was engaged and the boys were given free meals and free lodgings. From the start the Swami took a personal interest in the boys. Only very poor and intelligent students were admitted. Marriage was a disqualification for admission or continuance. In addition to giving free boarding and lodging and supervising their studies, the Swami by holding classes and talks instilled into their minds noble ideals of love, service and sacrifice.

Swami Ramakrishnananda passed away in the later part of the year 1911, but even during these six years (1905-1911) the institution had made its mark. The funds increased steadily as the work became more widely known ; ladies and gentlemen offered their mite in cash or kind for the maintenance of the Home ; visitors came to see and to help ; public institutions gave free studentships to many of its inmates ; the number on the rolls increased. Many persons who had scoffed at the idea or had considered the Home a "seven days' wonder" became its enthusiastic supporters.

But though the institution made steady progress, the difficulties were numerous. Every year many deserving boys were denied admission owing to lack of funds ; the income was fluctuating and unreliable ; the Home had to be shifted frequently to more and more spacious buildings, paying increasing rents. Hence the need for a permanent building and permanent endowment became more and more imperative. The desire to give the students a man-making education, by making them live in an institution where they would be under the influence of the teachers all day long, instead of the usual school hours, was keenly felt. Also to help the boys to earn their livelihood by independent labour instead of simply hunting after a clerkship became an object to be always kept in view.

All these things would have been impossible, at any rate early, but for the generous gift of 15 grounds of land



Swami Ramakrishnananda



Rao Sahib C. Ramaswami Aiyangar



by Mr. S. G. Sreenivasachariar, a staunch supporter of the Home. This made the idea of a permanent building practicable. An appeal was issued for funds. Merchants and Zemindars, lawyers and officials, men in all stations of life, readily responded. Some of them undertook to bear the cost of a room (Rs. 2,000/-) each in the name of their near and dear ones, the names of such donors being inscribed on brass tablets and fixed above the doorway of each room. With expert voluntary help the new buildings were constructed and opened in May 1921.

Since then, as the need arose, more extensive grounds were bought and buildings constructed for the various activities of the Home. The institution now covers a little over 7 acres, and the total cost of the land and buildings is nearly five lakhs.

## II

I shall now proceed to describe the manner in which the work of the Home is carried on. From the start, the aim has been to make the boys self-reliant and helpful to one another on the lines prevailing in a typical Hindu home. For, a Hindu household is a community where each has a certain share of responsibility and work allotted according to his or her strength and capacity. In the same way in the Home, almost all the work is done by the boys. Cleaning the premises ; keeping it neat and tidy ; purchasing the provisions and passing on the required quantity every day to the cooks ; buying the milk, curdling and churning it into butter-milk ; serving the food ; cleaning the dining halls and the verandas ; nursing the sick ; carrying on the worship ; settling the games and any disputes that may arise on the playground or elsewhere—all these and many other affairs connected with the administration of the Home are in the hands of the boys. This training proves of great benefit both while in the Home and in after

life. It is interesting to note that some of the old boys are now assisting the Secretary in his arduous work.

And how is all this done? The Secretary has, with the assistance of the resident masters, drawn up a detailed list of things to be done—and every thing has to be done by a boy or a group of boys—the work being changed month by month. Thus all the boys have something definite to do and as punctuality is insisted on, they do it at the right time. Learning by doing that is the key-note of modern education. As the daily work of the Home is carried out by the boys themselves, by learning to look after their individual needs and the needs of their fellow students, the boys learn what books cannot teach, the gospel of self-help and self-reliance through service.

At various times, I have come across many old boys who with kind remembrance have told me of the training they got in the Home. It has made them good men ; it has made them good citizens ; it has made them persons who in times of strain or emergency, can be depended upon. The world is always in need of such men.

## III

Perhaps the best way of understanding the life in the Home is the description of a day's stay there. I was privileged to do so ; and though some time has elapsed since my visit, yet the memory of it is still fresh ; and I long for another day of residence in that institution humming with activity. Let me now narrate what happened during the twenty-four hours of my stay there.

Early one sunny morning at about 7 A.M. I alighted and walked down the road leading to the Home. The main building appeared at the end of the road as a massive white building.

In front of the porch is the figure of a robust and alert boy with his shirt sleeves tucked up carrying a water jug on his right shoulder—truly a symbol

of the life in the Home. Entering by the gate I came to the porch. A young man who I learnt was an old boy and an assistant master in the residential school, politely enquired of me what I wanted. On learning that I had come to see the place, and if permitted, to stay there for a day, he asked me to be seated in the Library, and went to obtain the necessary permission.

The Library is large, having over 5,000 useful books on various subjects. They are placed in shelves reaching up to the ceiling. In the centre of the Hall are three long tables on which a number of magazines and newspapers are placed. I learnt that most of the books were presented by many friends of the Home in and out of Madras and that an extension will be necessary to accommodate the new volumes that are being received or bought. Towards the eastern end of the tables was a small easel. On it was the visitors' book, and I signed my name as is usual with visitors.

By this time the young man arrived and informed me that the Secretary had asked him to afford me facilities to see things for myself, and to look after my comforts during my stay there.

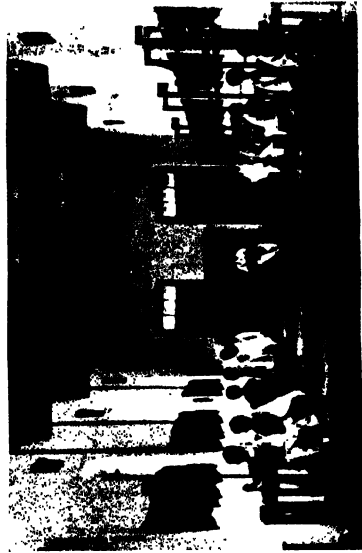
As we passed along the corridors we found many classic pictures both eastern and western. Some of them represent great scenes in Art and Literature. Some are landscape paintings by great masters. One of the most remarkable series was the gallery of portraits of the Presidents of the United States of America from the time of Washington, the first President, up to date. These are the gift of a good friend in America. Pictures of the great crystal Palace Exhibition also are there on the walls. A point worth mentioning about the arrangement of pictures inside the several halls is that in each is brought together a series representing the life and teachings of a saint or an incarnation. In one hall are found a number of pictures of Sri Krishna as pastoral and king-maker, in

another of Sri Rama, in a third of Buddha, in a fourth of Jesus Christ, in a fifth of Sri Ramakrishna, the saint of Dakshineswar, with his disciples, and so on. Fine water and oil colour paintings done by one of the boys, also were hung in one of the rooms. In these big halls or dormitories live the younger boys in groups of 12 to 20. They sit before small sloping desks, studying their lessons and their belongings are all neatly arranged in places set apart for them. A master is also there to look after the boys. Next we went over to the rooms of the College students. In every room there were three boys each of whom was provided with a table, a stool and a shelf. There are a similar set of rooms on the northern wing of the building. Then we went upstairs. The arrangements there were similar to those below—only all the boys were studying in the High School Classes.

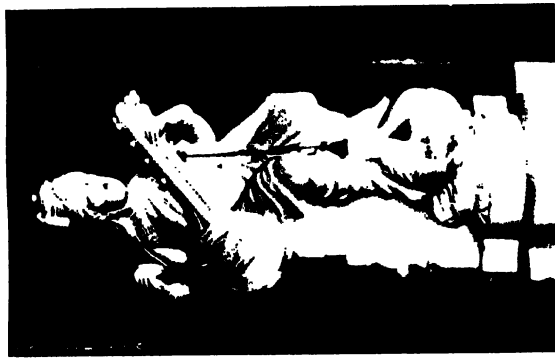
Next we went down to the Hospital. This is to the north of the main building and separated from it by a small vegetable garden. The Bobbili Medical Ward named after the Maharajah of Bobbili who bore the entire cost of the building, viz., Rs. 9,000/-, consists of three rooms—two being used as wards containing 4 beds each, the central room being the dispensary. There are also small closets with water taps etc. An old boy who is a graduate of the Madras Medical College lives on the premises to supervise the health of the boys and is assisted in his work by a visiting doctor who comes almost daily.

From the Medical ward we passed on to inspect the sanitary arrangements which we found to be splendid. The Home has adopted the latest system of flush-out latrines built on hygienic lines.

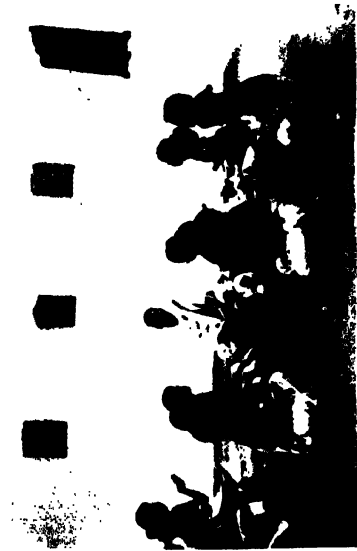
Returning to the main building, my friend took me to the kitchen. Here is the store room which even the most fastidious housewife would envy; the kitchen was large and well lighted. On both sides of it are the dining halls.



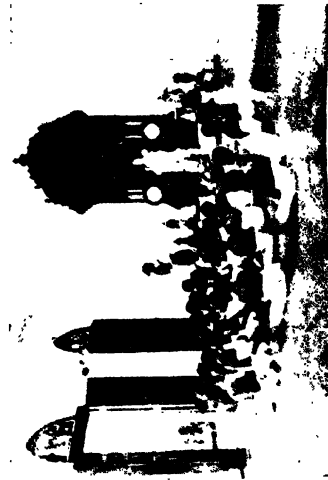
Boys at Study  
A Class Room



Saraswati Image



Religion Class  
The Service





Passing on to the back of the kitchen there lay before me a smaller vegetable garden. There were the well ; the iron and the cement tanks into which water is pumped up and stored. A shed with a number of taps where boys bathe is also to be found there.

Sharp at 8, three strokes from a bell were heard. This was for breakfast. The boys came to the dining hall with their tumblers, and taking a plank and a plate from the rack sat in their respective places. Then food was served. After chanting a short hymn of praise to the Lord, they had their breakfast which was distributed by a few boys whose turn it was to serve that day. After the first set was over, the servers and the resident masters had their breakfast. I was invited to join and I found the food simple and wholesome. A number of tiffin cups were kept in the kitchen to be filled with food for the boys who study in the colleges in different parts of the city.

#### IV

At ten minutes past nine, the school bell rang and I went to the Residential High School. The necessity for such a school attached to an institution like the Home will become apparent to any one who has seen the overcrowding in the ordinary schools. An attempt is being made here to reap in full the benefits of a boarding school of this kind. The smallness of the number of boys, the close observation of and attention to the work and progress of each individual, the familiar relation existing between the teacher and the taught, the opportunities offered for acquisition of knowledge, the spacious accommodation and free ventilation, and the healthy environment have all left their mark clearly on the life and activity of the students present. The school forms a valuable adjunct to the Home, the ideals of which form the basic principles of education. Here then we have the Gurukula system of ancient days, where the Guru lived in

intimate contact with his disciples and was thus able to inspire them with his own noble and lofty spirit.

The school buildings are a spacious pile, beautiful to look at. A distinctive feature of it is the big hall used for prayer by the whole school and for meetings and examinations. The cost of the buildings was mainly borne by the Nattukkottai Nagarathars, the merchant princes of South India, who paid Rs. 89,000/- and after whom the building has been named, the "Nagarathars' Vidyasala". Before the building was completed, I learnt, that for a short time the classes were held in the main building itself.

As I went round the classes, I saw the boys sitting on the floor before low desks, except in the Library and the Laboratory where stools and tables are provided. The teachers are evidently enthusiastic in their work. They are not hide-bound by rule of thumb. They are prepared to introduce innovations if they think they will be of use. For instance, they have adopted a modified form of the Dalton plan of individual work by the pupils with good success. The results in the public examinations, I was told, were always good. As the school is residential only those who board and lodge in the Home are admitted in the school. After finishing their school course, the boys have, at present, to join one or the other of the Colleges in the city for their higher studies ; but I was told that they were soon to have a College department also. I hope they would succeed in it, as another floor can easily be added to the present school buildings.

From the Residential School, we bent our steps to the Vocational Training Section. As I was interested in the history and development of this section, I found on enquiry that it comprised two sections. One was the Manual Training Section. The subjects taught in this section were weaving, rattan or cane work, goldsmithy and carpentry. Every boy in the Resi-



dential School attended one of these classes for a full afternoon once in three days. This kind of work while it gave a "hand and eye" training, also was intended to give a vocational bias to those who had a special taste for such subjects. The other section was intended to give an industrial training to those who had already gone through a course in the High School. These boys were taught either advanced carpentry and cabinet making or mechanical engineering which included lathe work, metal fitting and turning, casting and moulding. In this training, the boys are to spend four years to gain a thorough mastery of their subjects.

Both the Industrial sections have been a great success. In the showroom were chairs and tables, cushions and sofas; clothing of various kinds, bed-sheets, shirting cloth etc. There were also cane baskets, trays, cradles etc. I found them to be good in quality and fair in price. So it was no surprise for me to learn that the demand for them had been steadily on the increase; as a memento of my visit, I bought two towels and after the lapse of several months they still look almost new.

In the Mechanical Engineering section were lathes, milling and drilling machines, a steam boiler, and other appliances, necessary for the practical work of the boys. The power for driving the machines is electricity.

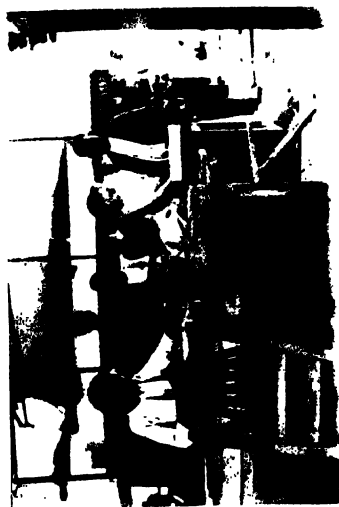
It was a real pleasure to see the boys engaged in their work. For, one could see the beginning of an Industrial India where each man who labours will earn his daily bread. And but for the Home many of these boys would be wandering round the offices in Madras or elsewhere, applying for a clerkship which they may never get or even then, feel a growing discontent. I learnt that the boys go out in groups on Sundays hawking the articles they have made, and thus learn not only the value of their work from customers who buy their articles, but what is more important, the dignity of labour. I spent

the whole of the forenoon and the afternoon in thus observing the students at work. Everywhere one could see that a great experiment till now unknown in South India both in its origin and scope is being carried on; and I felt hopeful of the future.

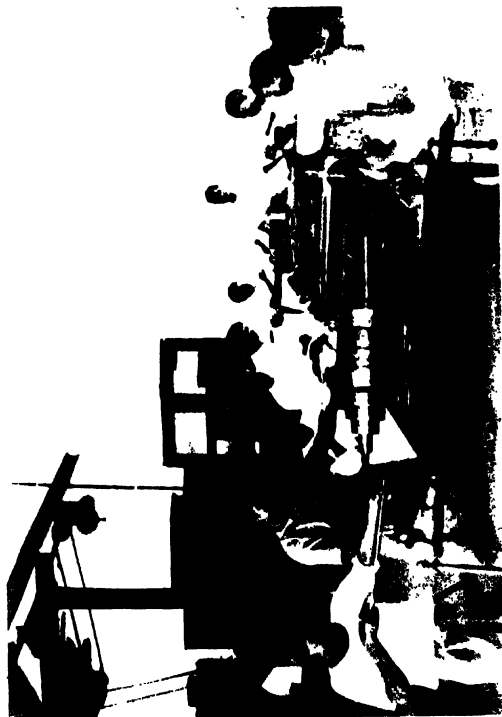
At 4 P.M. the boys left the school and for about half an hour spent their time in the garden, watering the plants, weeding and planting the seeds, conversing with each other merrily all the while. The tastefully laid out garden plots that the visitor sees in front of the porch and the quadrangles and the vegetable gardens are all the work of the boys, guided by the masters. They were occupied in the garden for half an hour and then they rushed off to their games.

The boys play football, volley ball, cricket and badminton as well as various indigenous games. This combined with drill early in the mornings and the strenuous work in the day makes them sturdy. Here I may mention that the weight, height and other physical measurements are noted as soon as a boy is admitted, and periodically checked. Any loss in weight or deficiency in health, is carefully watched, the doctor's advice sought for and acted upon.

A little before sunset, the call bell rang. The boys left play and after either bathing or washing themselves assembled on the verandah upstairs for the evening *Puja*. After performing *Sandhya*, they went in groups to classes where one of the masters explained and led the chanting of the religious hymns or Upanishads. I understood that special attention is paid to music. A talented gentleman has generously offered to come thrice a week and give lessons in music. The boys, I hear, are making good progress. One of the members of the staff also is a good musician, and holds regular classes for a second set. The music lessons and the religious classes as well as the early morning classes when the boys chant



Carpentry  
Raman Work



Mechanical Engineering  
Weaving



Vedic hymns supplement one another and are melodious to listen.

## V

Soon after, the classes dispersed and the boys marched in an orderly line to the Shrine of the Goddess Saraswati for congregational worship. The prayer hall is magnificent to look at. It is paved with marble and beautified with carved doorways and stained glass panels above the doors. It cost more than Rs. 15,000/- and the whole amount was paid by the late Pethachi Chettiar after whom it has been fitly named the "Pethachi Prayer Hall". The stained glass panels represent the figures of Krishna, Nataraja, Vishnu, and the great teachers in chronological order, Buddha, Jesus, Muhammad, Sankara, Ramanuja, Madhwa, Chaitanya and Vivekananda. A *vimana* of carved wood at the western side of the Hall has a cupola and under it is the figure of the goddess Saraswati in white marble. Her face breathes wisdom, peace and power, and elevates us un-awares to a new world.

Two students conduct the worship in the traditional manner. The others sit down on the *kusha asanams* spread on the floor. They join the prayer and standing up recite verse after verse in adoration of the Lord, both in Sanskrit and Tamil. After *arati*, the boys silently pass out. Those who desire to stay longer for meditation remain behind.

Throughout the service, there is a sense of peace and benediction. A feeling of calm fills one's mind, and is not that the aim of all true worship and meditation? Is it a wonder, then, that where such an atmosphere prevails, all work is joy and service and inestimable boon?

After Pujâ, the boys and masters sit down for supper and then have some rest. From 8 to 10 the boys read under the supervision of the masters. At 10 p.m. the bell rings for rest, though the younger boys go to sleep

half an hour earlier. In passing it may be mentioned that the buildings are lighted by electric current.

## VI

Before retiring to rest that night, I passed in review all that I saw and heard. All this work must mean men and money. As for men, I was told that Mr. C. Ramaswami Iyengar, Secretary from the beginning up to now, is an indefatigable worker and that the success of the Home is in no small measure due to his sincere but unostentatious work, though he himself says with characteristic modesty, that he is but obeying the behest of his master Swami Ramakrishnananda.

As for money, the public realised that it was an institution for the benefit of all alike and that society as a whole was bettered by it, and therefore was generous in helping the institution. The annual subscriptions which were about Rs. 400 in 1905 arose to Rs. 15,000 in 1927. The aid of the Government was also forthcoming in the form of grants for building, apparatus, furniture, equipment, etc.

From feeding and boarding 7 boys in 1905, the Home now feeds and boards nearly 140 boys under the supervision of the masters, most of whom live on or near the premises, and provides good education for them according to their needs and capacity.

The spiritual background of the whole work is the Ramakrishna Math; though about half a mile away, the connection between both is one of the closest. The President of the Math is also the President of the Home; the Secretary of the Math is also the Secretary of the Home. One of the Swamis of the Mission is generally the Resident Warden. The boys go to the Math frequently to listen to religious discourses; and the Swamis and Brahmacharies come to the Home almost daily. Thus the ideal of renunciation and service for which the Ramakrishna

Math and Mission stand, is ever kept before the residents of the Home.

As mentioned some time before, the teachers are mostly old boys. Bred up as they are in its traditions, to them the education of their younger brothers is a source of joy. They are paid salaries which are just enough for their subsistence. But whether married or single, they have chosen wisely and nobly, to dedicate themselves to this work. By their own life and by their teaching will grow up many young men of whom India may surely be proud. In order to see that they live as near the boys as possible, staff quarters are being now constructed on the other side of the road; and we soon hope that they will be in a position to spend the whole day with their wards.

Nothing is more significant of the high esteem the Home enjoys than the steady support that it is obtaining at the hands of all classes of men. Sannyasins, missionaries, businessmen, heads of educational institutions, and officers of the educational department, princes and poor men, politicians and others have paid and are paying visits to the Home and bearing eloquent testimony to the work. The Visitors' Book bears the names of all the well-known men in India. I may add that some of the supporters of the Home have sent their boys or wards for admission into the Home. Though, as a general rule, such boys are not admitted, yet exceptions are made in the case of well-wishers and friends who live far away from Madras and desire their sons to be left in an institution of this kind. These boys pay not only the boarding charges but a handsome contribution towards the Home funds. No distinction is made in any way between them and the poor boys, and no preferential treatment is given.

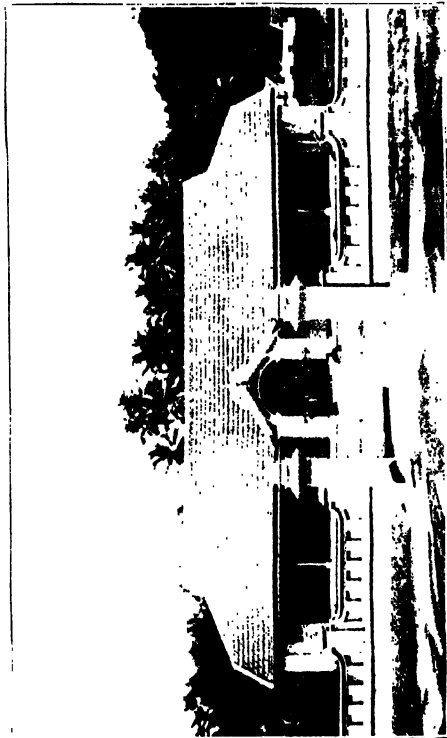
The management have several schemes for improvement on hand. As new developments are introduced, expenses increase, and the need for a

permanent endowment which will help to meet in part the recurring charges is felt to be a great necessity; already an earnest beginning has been made in this direction and two and a half lakhs have been secured. And of this, more than a lakh and a half is the contribution of the Madras Secretariat Party. This is a voluntary association of Government servants who under the leadership of Rao Bahadur C. Ramanujachariar, Assistant Secretary to the Government of Madras and disciple of Swami Ramakrishnananda, have turned their histrionic talents to use and profit for a worthy cause. Many ladies and gentlemen have endowed scholarships in the name of their near and dear ones, by donating Rs. 3,500/- or more, the interest of which is just sufficient to maintain a boarder.

## VII

I was not fortunate enough to be present on any of the special occasions, of which I heard glowing accounts, viz., the *Navaratri* festival when the Mother is worshipped every year with great rejoicing and when leading musicians and Bhaktas come to the Home and volunteer their services for the benefit of the boys and the outsiders, by giving performances; or the *Deepavali* day when all the boys get new clothes for wearing and are in great glee thus making the Home life really home-like. Many of them were looking forward at the time of my visit for the Home day (17th February every year) when there would be great rejoicings, as it is the day of re-union, when as many old boys as possible come to renew their acquaintance with those in the Home.

A look at the annual report showed me that the students come from all the various parts of South India,—from Ganjam and Ceylon, Coorg, Malabar and Mysore, and Tinnevely as well as the nearer districts. Differing in language, customs and manners, yet under the influence of the Home, a feeling of brotherhood and comradeship



Starting out for sale of Products  
Bobhill Medical Ward



comes into existence among these boys. The daily acts of service and common life and common aspirations make them feel a kinship that outlasts their Home life.

And in their relation to the world outside the Home the same spirit of service is shown. Once a year, the Ramakrishna Mission at Madras celebrates the birthday of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa and his illustrious disciple Swami Vivekananda. On these occasions, the Mission authorities collect money from sympathisers and feed thousands of poor people in a market at Mylapore. Here, then, the boys have a great opportunity.

Buying provisions and preparing them for cooking and serving them to the *Daridra Nārāyanas*, is a splendid opportunity for service. Recently when on account of a devastating fire, a hundred and fifty families in the neighbourhood of the Home were rendered homeless in the short space of two hours, the boys went to their assistance and rendered all possible help. The dailies of Madras bore testimony to their unstinted services and the boys themselves were glad they were of some use. On many Sundays lectures by the boys and others on religious subjects and health topics were given in the school for the benefit of the people in the neighbourhood. These lectures and talks are generally illustrated with lantern slides.

Before leaving the Home, I had the privilege of having a chat with the Secretary. He resides in the Home; His enthusiasm and fervour for the work so near to his heart is infectious; and I came away full of admiration and a desire to do all I can for the Home. While ever busy with the every day activities of the Home, the Secretary feels that much more remains to be done. The growing needs of the Home will require further additions of land; the school as mentioned before, will naturally achieve the status of a College when another floor will have to be

added; the equipment of a first class laboratory where old boys of the Home will have opportunities to do post-graduate work is one of his fond wishes (a brilliant old boy of the Home is now doing research work on drugs at the University of Manchester); in what manner the Adi-dravida brethren could be helped is a problem to which he has devoted his thoughts ever since he was an young man; he has a vision of the growth of the Industrial section to a stage when the whole thing will be converted into a factory, which will not only supply almost all the needs of the Home but will produce marketable products in large quantity. The addition of a printing press was also engaging his attention. In short his aim was to make the institution self-sufficient and self-supporting. According to him the Home is now only in its early stages.

It is now some time since these pages were written when revising the brief record of my visit. Now I have before me the latest issue of "Our Home Magazine". This originated out of a keen desire to draw closer to the Home the "Old Boys" and the general public who are interested in it and in its activities. Going through its pages, one finds a spirit of beauty and sincerity running throughout. It is the latest production of the past and the present boys of the Home in trying to renew their bonds of friendship and love.

I have been studying the works of Swami Vivekananda for years and when I see before me the work of the Mission in Madras, many passages in the utterances of the Swami come to my mind, wherein he makes mention of Madras as a centre for starting an institution to train young men in the paths of patriotism and service. May it not be that the Home is the fulfilment of the Swami's ardent desire to found such an institution as would send forth young men trained and eager for the service of the Motherland?



## EUROPE AND THE PROBLEM OF ASIA

BY JAGADISAN M. KUMARAPPA, M.A., PH.D.

*(Formerly known as John J. Cornelius)*

Mussolini recently urged his countrymen, like other statesmen of Europe, to end the decrease in births or face the destruction of the white races under the overwhelming masses of the yellow, brown and black races. Such warning is, of course, the logical corollary to the theory of "Nordic" supremacy. In order to minimize this alarm in the West, Prof. E. M. East of Harvard University declares that two-thirds of the annual increase of population is white, and that the rate of increase is about 13 per thousand for the whites and scarcely 2 per thousand for the coloured races. In spite of the sharp decline of the birth-rate in the West and the rapid increase in the East, the whites show an increase in population because, he says, they occupy the most fertile and least settled parts of the habitable globe and know how to develop and use their natural resources. The coloured races, on the other hand, are hampered either by living under handicaps of climate or soil, as in the case of most of the blacks, or in over-populated regions, as in the case of the Chinese, Japanese, Hindus and part of the Malays. Hence in the Asiatic countries owing to starvation and disease the mortality rate is very high. Therefore even if the birth-rate is high, the net increase in population, he maintains, is comparatively small. He thus leads the white races to believe that they could overcome the menace of Asia by virtue of their numbers and actual increase in their population.

Outside this group of race fiends, we find another made up of Western diplomats and capitalists whose main interest in Asia is exploitation. This group interprets the renaissance in Asia as a movement to end the dominance of the

West, and predicts the coming of a fierce struggle between East and West. Seeing that there is so much speculation as to the future relation of Europe and Asia, the writer ventures to examine within the scope of an article the character of the cultures and civilizations of these two great worlds and the outcome of the contact between them. Such a survey may help one to see whether Asia is a menace to Europe or Europe to Asia.

History tells us that Asia is the mother continent of the world. She is the mother of the most important races, including the dominant races of Europe. She is the mother of arts, religions and languages. It is here that man first began to explore the heavens, giving us the science of astronomy. She is the mother of navigation, of mathematics, of most of the arts and crafts of the world. While the forefathers of the so-called Nordics were still groping in the darkness of barbarism hiding their nakedness in fig leaves, it was Asia that gave the world its first centres of enlightenment. In fact, when civilization began to penetrate Europe, it was Asia from where it came. It was Asia that dared to pry into the mysteries of life and face its tragic realities with an honesty that has not been paralleled elsewhere, much less surpassed. Asia thus became the home of profound philosophies and the cradle of the great religions of the world. Is it not significant that not one of these living religions arose in any other continent? In spite of all these great contributions, where is Asia today? What has happened to her since the days of her first contact with Europe? To begin with, why did Europe come to Asia at all?

Europe's main problem, the problem of existence and land for expansion, drove her to the uttermost parts of the world. For the sake of food the man of the West strives with nature, conquers and exploits her; for the sake of territory he conquers peoples or exterminates races. Through his desperate struggle with nature, he learnt the secrets of chemistry, physics, biology and medicine. His life of ceaseless activity, his greed for gold and the passion for power drove him to the ends of the earth. His untiring efforts to overcome the obstacles he encountered have made him the master of the art of harnessing the powerful forces of nature. He built railways which revolutionized land travel and the distribution of commodities. To span oceans which separated him from the alluring treasures of other lands, he built ships which revolutionized ocean travel. He now builds aeroplanes to gain dominion of the air, and to reduce still further the size of the world. Thus the problems the man of the West faced and the methods he adopted to solve them have greatly changed the character of the civilization that Europe received from Asia.

Such struggle could not but result in making wealth the main-spring of European civilization. Hence it is that the West is ever ready to prostitute her knowledge of science to the exploitation of weaker and helpless peoples. Therefore from the rise of the Greeks and Romans down to the present day, the leading role in aggression and exploitation,—for the purpose of building vast empires of wealth and power,—has been played in the drama of human history by Western nations. This aspect of Western civilization has brought about the distinctive development of such skill, technique and power which have to do with conquest and domination, with material things rather than with the divine nature of man.

The economic motive naturally set Europe on a quest for colonies and

markets. It is this motive that brought Europe to Asia. Spain started out first to explore; then came Portugal, Holland and England; a little later France also followed in their train. The competition for colonies, for raw materials and markets brought the European nations frequently into collision with each other. Thus it is that Europe has come to have the proud distinction of having fought nine wars out of every ten in the world's history. All those nations which sought overseas possessions, or attempted to impose their political ideals on others, armed themselves to the teeth and made MIGHT their RIGHT.

When the markets of developed countries were closed by tariff walls those of the undeveloped countries were sought by the European nations, and in order to make such markets exclusive they even annexed territories. Incidentally it may be mentioned that in our 'civilized' society of nations when a military Power 'holds up' a helpless people and robs them of their silver and gold,—and even their territory when desired,—we are told that it is 'carrying civilization to backward peoples' or better still 'bearing the white man's burden'. For the very same act in a civil society the offender will be called a criminal and be punished as such. However by such methods France carved out a new colonial empire for herself in Africa and Indo-China. Italy, Portugal and Spain all obtained their due shares in Africa. Belgium took Congo Free State, which is eighty times the area of Belgium itself. Holland has an area of territory in colonial possessions which is sixty times as large as 'the mother country' itself. One-fourth of the world's land surface is being 'civilized' by Great Britain alone. Thus the West, through its territorial expansion, has brought under its control forty-seven out of the fifty-three million square miles of habitable earth, either by exterminating the original inhabitants or by subjecting them to its

political domination. It is now dominating and exploiting 98 per cent. of the soil and 92 per cent. of the population of Asia and Oceania. Actual Asian sovereignty covers less than 2 per cent. of the whole 18,418,666 square miles of its soil and extends over only 8 per cent. of its enormous population of nearly 940 millions.

Look over Europe's relation with China. Her abundant natural resources, —coal, iron, cheap labour,—made China appear as an inexhaustible treasure-house and it aroused the cupidity of the lustful West. As a result of the so-called Chinese Opium Wars,—which many historians tell us were provoked by the British merchants for selfish purposes,—China was compelled to sign with Great Britain the treaty of Nanking, by which she had to cede Hongkong to the latter and open to trade five "treaty ports". This treaty is known as the "charter of commercial rights in China", if you please! This unfortunate treaty was the entering wedge which eventually threw China open to the lust and fraud of the Western nations.

The killing of a French missionary and some sort of an insult to the British flag were, of course, sufficient reasons for another disastrous war. Again China was forced to sign the treaty of Tientsin, opening the Yangtze valley to foreign trade and providing for nine additional treaty ports. Subsequently forty-nine such ports were forced open by pressure of some sort or other. Later by another war the privilege of manufacturing as well as trading at the treaty ports was secured. The more the foreigners got out of China the more ravenous they became. The period from 1895 to the outbreak of the revolution is most marked by the gluttony of Western imperialism in China, and this period is rightly named by a writer as "the era of unashamed theft". It is really characterized by a greedy scramble of the Western Powers for commercial and industrial conces-

sions. Such concessions as railway building franchises, mineral exploitation, manufacturing monopolies, etc., were coerced from the effete ruling class in return for loans. Another form of concession is that which gave a single Power the prior rights of exploitation of the natural resources and human labour within a given area. This is known as the "spheres of influence". Such concessions were either coerced directly from the Chinese rulers by one Power or another, or were agreed to in some cases by an understanding between the various interested nations without taking the trouble even to consult the wishes of China in the matter.

Similarly Great Britain obtained dominion of the Yangtze valley; Germany controlled Shantung; Russia took a portion of Manchuria, while the French dominated the southern provinces of Yunnan, Kwangsi and Kwangtung bordering Indo-China. True to the mission of carrying the white man's burden, the Western Powers had thus marked out rich and strategic sections of China as "spheres of influence" as a prior step in dismembering her. It is America's unwillingness to join the international crooks in their plot to dismember China and share in their loot and her introduction of the "open door" policy that really saved China from being dismembered beyond recognition. So complete, indeed, has been foreign aggression and intervention in China that in all her extensive coast line of some three thousand miles, the Chinese empire possessed not one important harbour in which she could operate without foreign consent!

Furthermore foreign loans and indemnities totalling almost two and a quarter billion rupees were saddled on to her. China's inability to pay either the principal or the interest furnished the needed excuse for further foreign aggression. All the Powers concerned availed themselves of the opportunity to demand extra-territoriality. The collection of customs was then organized

under non-Chinese administration to pay to the foreigners the interest and the principal of the debts incurred by China as a result of the wars waged on her. She was allowed no voice in the fixing of the tariff schedules which were set for her at 5 per cent. with no provision for adjusting this duty to an increase in price. China was thus made a free trade country and her markets were thrown wide open as a "dumping ground" for the manufactured goods of the West. Such relation of Europe to China has rendered the latter economically and politically impotent. The weaker China became the more firmly did the alien industrial and financial octopus grip her throat. China's desperate struggle today is one of life and death; it is a struggle to free herself entirely from the venomous fangs of Western greed driven deep into her naked flesh.

India, like China, has also fallen a victim to it. Her natural resources and abundant cheap labour have been coveted from the earliest times by foreign nations. Since the 18th century, however, she has been dominated by British imperialism. India, it must be kept in mind, is one of the few countries which are economically self-sufficing. She is able to produce sufficient agricultural products to satisfy the demands of her people; she has more coal and iron than is necessary for her use. She has many navigable rivers and enormous reserves of water power. She has the monopoly of the world's jute; she can produce enough tea and rubber to take care of the world's entire demand. One of the richest oil fields in the world is found here. Some sections of India are heavily forested. With such a combination of economic and geographic factors India should be one of the leading countries of the world.

The European nations are not interested enough in the peoples of Asia to help in developing the countries to the best advantage of their inhabitants.

Their interest is mainly in exploiting the helpless and ever keeping them fixed in their helplessness. And Great Britain is no exception to the rule. One of the prominent British statesmen, Sir Joynson-Hicks has clearly stated the interest of the British in India in these words: "We hold it (India) as the finest outlet for British goods in general, and for the Lancashire cotton goods in particular." Though some Englishmen might object to this honest statement of facts by Sir Joynson-Hicks, it does not strike the people of India in the least as a mis-statement of the British policy. Rightly does Mahatma Gandhi also observe: "British rule in India, established and maintained through military and political coercion, has as its chief purpose the exploitation of Indian resources, Indian labour and Indian markets." British imperialism, through systematic exploitation covering over a period of nearly two centuries, has reduced India to the point of economic exhaustion. The economic retardation of India is due largely to the selfish interest of British capitalists, who block all economic development save that of commerce. This is inevitable since British industrialism is vitally dependent on India for cheap raw materials, and as market for manufactured goods and the investment of surplus British capital. Such interests of the British must naturally stand in the way of India's economic progress, for, the economic development of India would mean the absorption of raw materials by Indian industries and depriving of British industries of their prime market in Asia. It would also mean the rise of a group of Indian capitalists who would oust the British capitalists demanding India for the Indians. Is it strange then if the British capitalists have largely abstained from developing India's vast economic potentialities, and have even discouraged their development by Indians or by foreigners? Is it to be wondered if the British imposed excessive taxes on Indian manufactures

and low duties on British manufactured goods, or even allowed them to come in duty free? Are not such measures necessary if Britain is to maintain control of India's internal market?

This endless pursuit of self-interest, and greed for wealth and power have greatly differentiated modern European civilization from that of Asia. Such self-seeking has produced in the man of the West a sense of conquering energy and adventurous spirit; it has given him a knowledge and capacity to tackle the unfamiliar, a genius for administration and political organization. But what is worse, it has created in him an insatiable greed for gold and craving for creature comforts. For the sole purpose of filling its coffers with gold, Europe has used and is using force and other unscrupulous methods in exploiting Eastern lands. The peoples of the East, being non-militaristic, feared the brute strength of the West; but the Western nations, drunk with the greed of gold and power, have ever remained oblivious to the idealism of the East. While Europe is thus dominating Asia, why does Europe consider Asia a menace? What are the foundations for the "yellow peril" theory the West propagates?

How is one to account for such apprehension in the West? May it not be that the West perceives in the Oriental civilization some pernicious principle? However, when one makes a careful analysis one finds that Buddhism is really the germ out of which Eastern civilization has emerged. The fundamental beliefs,—that the desire of the individual existence is the root of all suffering, that true happiness is only possible when the knowledge of the transitoriness of all things, and the mastery of the error of self are attained,—underlie all Oriental life and thought. Further it must be mentioned that it is these beliefs which have brought about that attitude of the Eastern mind towards scientific and practical knowledge which so differentiates it from the

Western mind. In other words, these beliefs have made the Orient, not blind to the usefulness of science, but more sensitive to spiritual values.

In such ideals and teaching an impartial critic finds it difficult to discover the rampant and hideous dragon of the "yellow peril". On the other hand, he finds the temper of the Oriental civilization to be pre-eminently peaceful. It certainly does not have the blood-curdling records of organized murders and atrocities. The man of the East neither records nor prides in the fall of kingdoms and the rise of empires. These are despised and forgotten, but every step taken by man in climbing the ladder of spiritual progress is immortalized, since it is that which reveals the meaning and purpose of his own creation.

Further, the civilization of the Orient is essentially sedentary. The love of their motherland, the worship of their ancestors, the reverence of their tombs, make the Oriental cling to the soil of his birth. China freely shared her civilization with the peoples of the Far East but seldom attempted to force her rule upon others. India sent out Buddhism to other lands on a cultural and religious mission, and of all missionary religions, of Buddhism alone can it be said that it never carried on propaganda with the sword. History reveals further that India, China and Japan have seldom engaged themselves in any offensive warfare of conquest. India and China, like Europe, have suffered at the hands of Asiatic hordes. The last war in the East was forced upon Japan by Russia, but Asia has never followed the policy of expansion through conquest and exploitation. Such record can only be the result of the profound influence of the non-aggressive and non-violent philosophy of life adopted by the Orient. Asia's history, her philosophy of education, her thought and life and the principles of her civilization fail to reveal any basis whatsoever for the pernicious "yellow

peril" propaganda. And what is more, after a critical examination of Asian life and thought, one cannot escape the conclusion that should Asia be allowed to develop along lines which are normal and natural to her, she could never become a menace to any nation.

As facts stand today it is Europe, and not Asia, which is a menace to civilization. The Orient witnessed something of it in the Great European War. Since then Asia has become quite conscious of the gruesome reality of European menace to her civilization, nay to her very existence. Therefore she is now putting forth desperate efforts to overthrow the white supremacy to save herself and her civilization. Europe has no doubt rendered Asia a valuable service in having given her the shock that was necessary to wake her up from her long slumber. And today no observer fails to see in the social, industrial and educational movements the rapidly changing mind of the Orient. Witness the new role of women in the national life of the East. Women have received liberation from that thralldom which stifled Turkish progress for generations. In a Teachers' Association in 1921 more than a thousand women delegates were supplied by Constantinople alone. The Queen of Afghanistan, by discarding the veil during her recent European tour, completed the emancipation of her sisters in the Middle East. The Feminist movement in Egypt, under the leadership of Mme. Sharaawi Pasha, arose in 1923, and was represented at the International Women's Convention in Rome and later in Paris. In India also women have begun to take active part in politics and municipal government. One finds them, though in small numbers, on district boards, in municipal councils, the senates of universities and in legislative councils. India has gone so far as even to elect a woman, Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, to succeed Mahatma Gandhi as President of the Indian National Congress,—the foremost political organisa-

tion of India. No country in the West has yet conferred a similar honour on a woman. And Japanese women are no less active in the national uplift of their country, and the part they are playing is well-known.

Similarly vast changes are taking place in the industrial life of Asia. In shipbuilding Japan has caught up with the nations of the West. And today there are only two Western nations, America and Great Britain, that exceed Japan in output. Japan is now able to produce one-fifth of the world's output. Chinese industry could boast of only two factories in the beginning of this century and now the number is 270. In India, between 1892 and 1925, the number of factories increased from 650 to 7,000. Since Gandhi Movement a great number of cottage industries have also been revived. Great changes are taking place in Turkey also. The extent to which the Near East has become the greatest trade highway can be gauged by the fact that the Suez Canal Company records the passage of 5,000,000 tons of Oriental shipping in excess of pre-war figures. The Orient has become aware of the benefits of industry and commerce, and they are now awake to the fact that they could really turn out things as efficiently as their white masters. But this new consciousness and confidence is making the domination of Europe unbearable.

Awakened by European contact, the Orientals have come suddenly to a consciousness of their material strength, and the Great European War, exposing the spiritual bankruptcy of Western civilization, has emphasised greatly the spiritual heritage of the East to the Oriental mind. As the cannons roared and sent up the accumulated wealth of Europe into smoke, the present renaissance found its birth in India. Non-violent Indians, suave Persians, industrious Chinese, even the land-locked people of Afghanistan, along with the Arabs and Egyptians, are following in the wake of Turkey and Japan to a

persistent revolt against white dominance in the world. In such a revolt all Asia has made common cause.

Yesterday Europe thought of Asia only as a continent for exploitation and today she thinks of Asia as a serious problem. Yesterday Asia thought of Europe as the hope of the world and today she thinks of Europe as a menace to spiritual progress. Therefore it is that Tagore, the prophet of the Orient, rightly warns Asia of the danger of adopting the principles of Western civilization at the expense of her spiritual heritage. He asks: "After centuries of civilization nations fearing each other like the prowling wild beast of night-time; shutting their doors of hospitality, combining for purposes of aggression or defence, hiding in their holes their trade secrets, state secrets, secrets of their armaments, making peace offerings to the barking dogs of each other with the meat that does not belong to them; holding down fallen races struggling to stand upon their feet; with their right hands dispensing religion to weaker peoples, while robbing them with their left,—is there anything in this to make us envious? Are we to bend our knees to the spirit of this nationalism which is sowing broadcast over all the world seeds of fear, greed, suspicion, unashamed lies of its diplomacy and unctuous lies of its profession of peace and good-will and universal brotherhood of man? Can we have no doubt in our minds, when we rush to the Western market to buy this foreign product in exchange for our own inheritance?"

Such changed attitude towards Europe is quite noticeable everywhere in the Orient. The doctrine of European eminent domain was forced upon Asia by force. Young Asia declares, therefore, that nothing that is within the domain of right, the West can alienate from the East by force, and that no title is valid which has been acquired by an alien Power by force or forced treaties. Hitherto Europe trampled

upon the rights of the peoples of Asia under the pretence of civilizing them. Now Young Asia flatly refuses to accept even the inducement of material prosperity and "peace and order" as adequate compensation for the lack of responsible government. The less chance a race has in the control of its own destiny, the greater is its moral deterioration. Young Asia demands, therefore, freedom from European domination. She demands that there be no attempt to force foreign capital and trade upon her people, that the Orientals be entitled in the countries of the whites to rights and privileges equal to those the whites enjoy in the Oriental countries. This is really Asia's Declaration of Rights. Has not Asia any right to full sovereignty over her own soil? Is she wrong in refusing to submit herself much longer to the bondage of Western Imperialism?

Is it not absurd to expect Asia to be ever under the domination of Europe? If Asia's struggle for freedom is what Europe considers as the "Asiatic Menace", then, of course, it must remain a menace. But really speaking it is Europe that is menacing the best interests of humanity by its greed for gold and thirst for power. The sooner the West shakes off its illusion that she is the saviour of mankind,—that her civilization is so essential a part of the world's happiness and well-being that it must be imposed upon others, that she being 'superior' should direct the destiny of the peoples of Asia, the better it will be for the peace of the world. Only when Asia enjoys full freedom will she find it possible to realize more fully the inherent tendencies of her own spirit. Only in such realization will we find the purpose of true humanity fulfilled. The unity of all human life, the brotherhood of man, is the essential doctrine of the most potent religions of the East, and it is that essence which will naturally determine the further development of the Oriental civilization, if the Orient is not

compelled by continued injustice and oppression to forsake her ideals and adopt an alien law of life. If Asia is ever to assume a destructive form, it could only be through such compulsion.

Just as day and night form one unit of time, so also the East and West make up the world. They are not antagonistic but complementary. The most important step in ensuring world peace is the reconciliation of these two great sections. War will cease only when it no longer presents hopes for gain to the greedy nations. Therefore the stupendous problem of peace can only be solved by giving weaker nations and non-militaristic peoples freedom and justice. Thus alone can international rivalry and economic competition be transformed into international fellowship and co-operation. But the West though it has increased its material prosperity, has failed in correlating moral progress. And yet, it is moral progress that the world badly needs today; not a change of methods but a change of heart is our pressing need.

The recent world events—the rise of Japan, the awakening of China, the renaissance in India, the emerging of Turkey,—must inevitably make the West conscious that she is now witnessing the beginning of the end of the separate existence of East and West. Undoubtedly there have been crises which loomed large in past history but none of them can surpass the drama which is now being enacted in the Orient, upon the outcome of which the welfare of all mankind depends. The “yellow peril” or the “Asiatic menace” propagandist clouds the issue by appealing to fear and prejudice. But the issue now pending can be solved in the proper way only by understanding sympathetically Asia’s national aspirations and her struggle for freedom.

Aggressiveness, be it cultural or political, is not in keeping with the spirit of the Orient, and therefore her nationalism is not for expansion but for freedom. Mahatma Gandhi, in whom

the real spirit of the Orient is so well personified, defines patriotism thus: “For me patriotism is the same as humanity. A patriot is much less a patriot, if he is a lukewarm humanitarian.” Very different, indeed, is this ideal of Oriental patriotism from the Occidental variety “My country right or wrong.” The East has now fully understood the civilization of the West,—its patriotic bragging, its feverish activity, its greed for gold, its complex organization, its methods of efficiency, and its creed of pharasaic superiority. It has also seen that the play of such forces of passion and self-seeking has resulted in making man a demon and the world, a hell.

The Orient is now gaining confidence and strength in its belief that after all spirituality is the only emancipator of man and the only power that can help him to grow more and more in the image of his Creator. When Asia gains her complete freedom she will then export to the West not theories of political and economic exploitation and advanced technique of cruel and barbarous warfare, but spiritual principles of human relationship,—co-operation in the sharing of economic advantages, new methods in correcting social wrongs and settling national disputes. She will export also elevating thoughts and vitalizing spiritual ideals to enrich the impoverished soul of the West. The West will then learn to drink deep from the spiritual fountain of the East, and the East, likewise, will avail herself of the great scientific contributions of the West to the promotion of human welfare and happiness. The Orient and the Occident will thus influence each other so profoundly as to aid and hasten the evolution of an all-human civilization. This mission Asia can fulfill only if its newly released energies are not prevented by European violence and intervention from being directed to the realization of aims and purposes that have a spiritual end. If Europe is to help in this mission she should renounce



her worldly and selfish ambitions and determine ever to subordinate national egoism to the larger interests of humanity. This renaissance in Asia, we fervently hope, will lead Europe to renounce violence and selfishness and

adopt reason and justice in all human relations. The West has taught the East WAR, but the East, we hope, will teach the West to unlearn war and learn PEACE.

## SRI RAMAKRISHNA AT THE STAR THEATRE

[FROM THE DIARY OF M.]

### I

[AT THE PERFORMANCE OF *Prahlada-Charitra*]

In the evening of Sunday, the 14th December, 1884, Sri Ramakrishna went to the Star Theatre, Calcutta, accompanied by M., Baburam and Narayan, to see the performance of *Prahlāda-Charitra*, a play on the life of the great saint Prahlada. The Star Theatre was then situated in the Beadon Street.

The Master and the disciples occupied a box facing northward. The Theatre was brilliantly illuminated. Girish Chandra Ghose, the great dramatist and actor, came to the Master and engaged in a short conversation. The curtain had not yet risen.

Sri Ramakrishna said smilingly to Girish: "You have written fine things."

"But, Sir," replied Girish, "I have not assimilated them in my life. I have merely written them."

Sri R: "No, you have assimilated them. Did I not tell you the other day that one cannot portray noble and divine characters without devotion at heart?"

"One must assimilate. I went to see the performance of *Nava Brindāvan* at Keshab Sen's. There I saw a Deputy Magistrate who drew a salary of Rs. 800 every month. I was told that he was a great scholar. But he was extremely engrossed in his son. He was anxious

that his son should have a good seat and see the performance well. All the while spiritual conversations were going on, but he had no ear for them. The son was continuously enquiring about many things and he was busy humouring him. He has merely read books, but has not assimilated them."

Girish: "I am thinking of disbanding the Theatre."

Sri R: "No, no, let it remain: it will teach people."

The performance began. Prahlada\* was seen attending school. On seeing him, the Master affectionately uttered his name several times and plunged into Samadhi.

In another scene, seeing Prahlada thrown at the feet of an elephant to be trampled to death, the Master began to weep. He also wept when Prahlada was thrown into fire.

The Lord was seen sitting in Heaven with his Divine consort, anxiously thinking of Prahlada. This scene again plunged the Master into Samadhi.

### II

[SIGNS OF GOD-REALISATION]

At the end of the performance, Girish led the Master to his private sitting room in the Theatre. Girish asked him: "Would you like to see the performance of *Vivāha-Vibhāta*

\* Prahlada was the son of the Demon King Hiranyakasipu who hated the Lord Vishnu intensely. The son however became a great devotee of Vishnu from his early life. The king was so angry that he threw him into water, fire, at the feet of mad elephants and from the top of mountains in order to kill him. But the grace of Vishnu always saved the boy. Vishnu at last killed the king in the form of a Man-lion.

(Confusion in Marriage)?” “No,” replied the Master, “I won’t. What is this after *Prahlada-Charitra*? ... There were fine spiritual conversations all this time, -- and now *Vivaha-Vibhrata*—worldly talks! The old worldly thoughts will be revived again.”

*Girish* : “How did you find the performance?”

*Sri R* : “I found that the Lord Himself had become all those. The actresses I saw to be the Blissful Mother Herself. Those who played the parts of cowherd boys, I found them to be the Lord Narayana Himself. He Himself has become all these.

“There are signs by which you can know if a man has truly seen God. One is that the man is filled with bliss, — he is no longer reticent. He becomes like the sea which has waves on the surface but deep waters below. He who has seen God lives sometimes like a mad man ; sometimes like an evil spirit, without any sense of purity and impurity ; sometimes like stock or stone, for the vision of God within and without himself silences him ; and sometimes again like a child, without any fixed determination, walking about nude with his cloth rolled up in his arms. In such a state of God-realisation, a man sometimes becomes child-like ; sometimes he cuts jokes and sometimes becomes like a young man ; when he works or teaches, he is like a lion.

#### [MEANS OF GOD-VISION : THREE KINDS OF DEVOTEES]

“Because of his egoism, man cannot see God, just as a cloud obstructs the vision of the sun. But does that mean that the sun does not exist?—It does.

“The ego of a child is harmless ; it is rather helpful. Fried greens are not good for stomach, but the particular vegetable, called *hinche*, is beneficial. Therefore it is not to be counted among greens. Similarly sugar candy is not to be counted among sweets. Other kinds of sweets are injurious to health, but sugar candy is medicinal.

“Therefore I said to Keshab Sen : ‘If I say more, you will have to lose your sect.’ Keshab got frightened. I then told him that the ego of a child or of a servant of the Lord is not harmful.

“The man of realisation sees that the Lord Himself has become this universe and its beings. Everything is He. A man of such vision is the best devotee.”

*Girish* : (smiling) “Everything is He. But a little of ego still exists, but it will not cause ‘disease’.”

*Sri R* : (smiling) “Yes, it is harmless. This ego is for the enjoyment of God. Enjoyment is possible only so long as there are ‘I’ and ‘thou’.

“There is also a middle class of devotees. They find God existing in every being as its inner controller.

“The lowest class says that God is yonder, that is to say, beyond the sky! (Laughter)

“When I saw the cowherd boys on the stage, I actually found that they were the embodiments of the Lord Himself.

“He who has seen God, actually feels that God is the doer, not he himself.”

*Girish* : “Sir, I have truly realised that it is the Lord who is doing everything.”

*Sri R* : “I say, ‘Mother, I am the machine, Thou art the mechanic ; I am insentient, Thou art the principle of consciousness ; I act as Thou makest me act ; I speak as Thou makest me speak.’ The ignorant think that things are done partly by themselves and partly by God.”

#### [KARMA YOGA AND PURIFICATION OF MIND]

*Girish* : “Sir, what am I doing and what is the use of work?”

*Sri R* : “No, no, work is good. When the soil is well prepared, then whatever you sow in it, will grow. But work must be disinterested.

“There are two kinds of Paramahansas,—Jnani (wise) and Premi (loving). The Jnani Paramahansa is concerned with himself alone,—he is satisfied if he has realised his own freedom.

The Premi Paramahansa, like Sukadeva, teaches others after having himself realised God. Some clean their lips after eating mangoes. Others give mangoes also to neighbours. Some, while sinking a well, procure spades and baskets, and when the well is sunk, throw them into it. Others preserve the spades and baskets for their use by neighbours. Sukadeva and others like him kept the baskets and spades.

(To Girish) "You will keep them for others."

[SRI R. ON SIN : PURE DEVOTION]

Girish : "Then bless me."

Sri R : "Have faith in the Mother's name, everything will come right."

Girish : "But I am a sinner."

Sri R : "The fellow who always talks of sin becomes a sinner."

Girish : "Sir, even the place where I would sit, would become impure."

Sri R : "How is that? When you bring a light into a room dark for a thousand years, will the room be lighted gradually or all at once?"

Girish : "You have blessed me."

Sri R : "If you are earnest, well,—what shall I say? I take the Lord's name and live, that's all."

Girish : "I lack earnestness. But you will have to give me that."

Sri R : "Who am I? If Narada or Sukadeva had been here, then —"

Girish : "Narada and Sukadeva are not available now. But I have got you."

Sri R : (smiling) "Very good. Faith!"

All sat silent for a while. Then Girish said: "I have one earnest desire,—to have pure causeless devotion."

Sri R : "Only the *Iswarakotis*, the special souls who are the associates of God, can have that devotion, the *jivakotis* cannot have it."

Again there was silence. Sri Ramakrishna sang gazing upwards:

"All cannot have the Mother. Even Shiva finds it hard to fix his mind on Her blessed feet. My mind, alas, is disconsolate.

"Whoever thinks of the Mother finds even the highest heavenly bliss insignificant. He floats in eternal joy if Mother casts Her gracious look on him.

"Those blessed feet of Hers, even the greatest Yogins cannot realise in meditation. But Kamalakanta, though devoid of merit, yet longs to have them."

Girish : "Yes, Kamalakanta, though devoid merit, yet longs to have those blessed feet!"

### III

[MEANS OF GOD-REALISATION : EARNEST YEARNING]

Sri R : (to Girish) "Through strong dispassion for the world, God can be realised. The heart must pant and pine. A disciple asked his master: 'How can I realise God?' 'Come with me,' said the teacher and led him to a tank and held him under the water. After a short while he brought him up and asked him: 'How did you feel while I held you under water?' He replied: 'My heart was panting as if life would go out.' The teacher then said: 'Well, when you will feel similarly for God, you will attain Him.'

"Therefore I say that when the three attractions will be united into one, then you will realise God. If a man can feel a love for God as strong as these three loves combined,—the passion of a worldly man for worldly things, the love of a chaste woman for her husband and the affection of a mother for her child,—then he will have an immediate vision of the Lord.

"Call on the Mother earnestly, O mind, She will not tarry behind.' If you call on Her yearningly, She must reveal Herself."

[JNANA YOGA AND BHAKTI YOGA : THEIR SYNTHESIS]

"I told you the other day what is meant by Bhakti. It is to worship Him with body, mind and word. With body,

that is to say, to worship and serve Him with the hands, to walk to places sacred to Him, to hear the readings of scriptures or the singing of His name and praise, and to see His sacred images. With mind, that is, to meditate always on Him and contemplate on His *līlā*. With word, that is, to recite invocations to Him or sing His blessed names and qualities.

"In this Kali age, the most efficacious means of God-realisation is Bhakti as propounded by Narada,—the singing of the Lord's name and praise. Let those who have not enough time, devotedly repeat *Haribol* every morning and evening, clapping their hands in accompaniment.

"The 'I' of a devotee does not cause egoism. It does not breed ignorance, but rather leads to God. It is not therefore properly speaking an ego. . . .

"First steadfast application, then devotion. When devotion ripens, then comes ecstasy (*bhāva*). When ecstasy becomes intense, it becomes *mahābhāva*. And last of all comes love. Love is like a rope. To have love is to bind God,—God cannot escape. The common man can reach up to *bhava*. *Iśwarakotis* alone can attain *mahābhava* and love. *Chaitanyadeva* had them.

"What is Jnana Yoga? It is the path of knowing one's real self, of knowing oneself as Brahman Itself. *Prāhlada* would be sometimes conscious of himself as Brahman ; at other times he would feel the distinction of 'I' and 'thou' and then he would take up the attitude of a devotee.

"*Hanuman* said: 'O Rama, sometimes I find that Thou art the whole and I am Thy part ; and at other times that Thou art the Lord and I am Thy servant. But when I attain to Self-knowledge, I find that I and Thou are identical.' "

*Girish* : "Ah !"

[IS GOD-REALISATION POSSIBLE FOR A HOUSEHOLDER ?]

*Sri R* : "Why should not one be able to realise God in the householder's

life? But then one must have *viveka* and *vairāgya* (spiritual discrimination and dispassion). One must sincerely and permanently feel that God alone is real and all other things are evanescent.

"Floating on the surface won't do. One must dive deep."

So saying, the Master sang :

"Dive deep, dive deep, O mind, dive deep into the Ocean of Beauty. And search deeper and deeper to the bottom, only then can you find the great Pearl of Love.

"In thine own heart abides *Brindavan*, the home of Love, only seek it and discover. And for ever and ever will the Light of Wisdom illumine thy mind.

"Who is he as can steer his boat on land? Says *Kuvir*, 'Listen, O listen! Meditate ever on the Guru's hallowed feet!'"

*Sri R* : "But one thing : in diving, there is the fear of crocodiles—lust, anger and other passions."

*Girish* : "But I have no fear of death."

*Sri R* : "But there is fear from lust and other 'crocodiles.' Therefore you must rub turmeric on your body, and then dive. What is turmeric?—it is discrimination and dispassion.

"Some attain to Knowledge even in the householder's life. Therefore two kinds of Yogis have been spoken of ;—the hidden Yogi and the manifest Yogi. Those who have renounced the world are manifest Yogis, and every one can know them as such. But the hidden Yogi has no outward manifestation. He is like a maid-servant who is working in her master's house, but whose mind is ever after her children left behind in her country-home. He can also be likened to an unchaste woman of whom I told you ;—she performs all her household duties enthusiastically, but in her mind she ever thinks of her lover.

"It is very hard to acquire *viveka* and *vairāgya*. It is very hard, to destroy the consciousness that 'I am the doer' and 'I possess all these things.' I saw a Deputy Magistrate who earned a salary of Rs. 500 per mensem. Spiritual conversations were going on, but to those

he did not pay any heed. He was engrossed in his son whom he had brought with him,—he was busy finding a good seat for him. I know another man, I won't name him; he used to practise *japa* assiduously. But he gave false evidence for ten thousand rupees!

"Therefore I say, if you have *viveka* and *vairagya*, you can realise God even as a householder."

[SRI R. AND SINNERS]

*Girish*: "What will happen to me, a sinner?"

Sri Ramakrishna did not reply, but sang the following song in a plaintive voice, casting his look upwards:

"Never think of the Lord, O mind, if thou wouldst end the fears of death.

"This thought will remove thee of all spiritual fear, for whoever thinks of the Lord crosses the stormy ocean in the twinkling of an eye.

"Why didst thou come to the earth? Why art thou disposed towards evil thoughts and actions? Thou shouldst not ruin *basarathi*. O mind, atone for thy misdeeds by thinking of the Eternal Being."

*Sri R. (to Girish)*: "Whoever thinks of the Lord, crosses the stormy ocean in the twinkling of an eye."

"You can see the Lord, only if *Mahāmāyā* stands aside from the door and allows you to enter. Hence the necessity of *Shakti*-worship. The Lord is so near to us, yet we cannot see Him, because *Mahamaya* is standing between. Rama, Sita and Lakshmana were passing. Rama was going ahead, with Sita following him, and Lakshmana went last. Rama was really only four feet off from Lakshmana. Yet Lakshmana could not see him because Sita was between them.

"In order to worship God, you have to take a particular emotional attitude towards Him. I have three attitudes: those of a child, of a maid-servant and of a lady friend. I passed many days in the last two attitudes. Then I used to put on clothes and ornaments like

women. The child-attitude is excellent.

"The hero-attitude is not good. The *Nerhās* and *Nerhis* (*Vaishnavas*) and the *Bhairavas* and *Bhairavis* (*Tantrikas*) practise this. This attitude often causes fall.

*Girish*: "I once had this attitude."

The Master was perturbed to hear this and anxiously looked at *Girish*.

*Girish*: "Yes, I have this crookedness. Please tell me how I can get rid of it."

*Sri R. (after thinking awhile)*: "Give Him 'the power of attorney.' Let Him do whatever He thinks best."

[SATVA GUNA AND GOD-REALISATION]

The Master began to speak of his boy disciples.

*Sri R. (to Girish and others)*: "They do not desire to have a household. They do not seek the pleasures of married life. Those who are already married, do not sleep with their wives. The fact is, until one has eradicated *rajas* and acquired *satva guna*, one cannot fix one's mind on God, love Him or realise Him."

*Girish*: "You have blessed me."

*Sri R.*: "I don't think I have. But I have said that if you are sincere, you will realise Him".

Thus the Master conversed, and at last uttering, *Anandamayī, Anandamayī*, he immersed into *Samadhi*, in which he remained for a long time.

Slowly the Master regained consciousness and said: "Where are the fellows?"

M. fetched Baburam. . . .

The Master sang:

"At last I have thought rightly. I have been initiated into those thoughts by a man of deep feeling and understanding.

"I have come across one who hails from a land where there is no night. And now neither by day nor in the evening do I perform any ceremonial worship.

"I am awakened and will sleep no more. I am ever awake in the state of *Yoga*. O Mother, having realised Thee who puttest all to the sleep of delusion, I have put sleep to sleep.

"Says Prasad : 'I bow to both Enjoyment and Liberation. I have known that Kali is the same as Brahman, and therefore I have renounced both *dharma* and *adharma*.'"

He then sang another song describing the great spiritual efficacy of reciting the name of Kali.

Having finished singing, Sri Ramakrishna said : "I prayed to Mother : 'Mother, give me pure devotion,—I do not want anything else.' " . . .

[SRI R. AND THE PROSTITUTES]

By that time the performance in the Theatre had been over. The actresses

came to Sri Ramakrishna to salute him under instructions from Girish. They all bowed down at his feet. And the devotees were surprised to see that some even touched his feet. When the actresses touched his feet, the Master said : "Let be, mother, let be." His words were full of compassion.

When they had gone, he said : "All are Mother Herself in different forms."

Girish and other devotees led the Master to his carriage. But no sooner had the Master entered it than he plunged into deep Samadhi. The carriage drove on to Dakshineswar.

## PRACTICE OF RELIGION

BY ANANDA

IN THE OUTER COURT

There are some people who think that the call of religion has come to them ; they give up worldly occupations and take to the ways of the avowedly religious. Some will even go to monasteries in their temporary zeal, seeking admission into the life of renunciation. But it often happens that many of these candidates for the life of religion and renunciation are scarcely fit for it. They lack those preparations and qualifications without which religious life proves dry and barren, extremely miserable and even harmful.

For, the practice of religion is not easy. It is not a matter of mere choice. Many are the stages that must be covered before the man of the world can reach the point of real, serious religion. To most, these stages are scarcely known, or knowing them, they do not duly consider them. Though ill-qualified and ill-equipped, they are possessed by the desire to reap the blessings religion offers. The result is mental confusion and great disappointment.

It will not be useless, therefore, if we survey the preliminary stages of practical religion and consider, however

imperfectly, some of the features of the strait and narrow path.

The vast majority of mankind are religious in name, but not in life seriously. They are yet far, far off from the requisite condition of mind. They have too much of the body-consciousness and are obsessed and bound by finite things. Even a most distant glimpse of the Infinite is not yet for them. They want enjoyment of the body, power, earthly riches, sexual enjoyment and long life ; and they are afraid of renunciation and death. Thus most men live and die, completely earth-bound, without any conscious effort to go beyond its limitations. For them religion can but be formal. If they were left alone in a solitary island, provided with means of worldly occupations, they would not trouble about religion. But since they have to live in human society where religion exists as a universal institution and where they learn certain habits of thought and action, apparently religious, they appear interested in religion. But they have no idea of it as a reality.

This, however, is not the complete

picture of even the worldly man. There is another side of the picture, which is brighter. This other side depicts the hope and the unfolding glory of man. Man does not live for himself alone. Even the most ordinary worldly man cannot rest satisfied with loving himself alone. He also loves others, though maybe they are his own relations. He has moral consciousness. He seeks more and more knowledge: he has caught the lure of truth. He has the sense of beauty. It is true this latter aspect is dormant in the life of most men, but it is there nevertheless.

It is this that leads man higher and higher in the realisation of truth and fulfilment of life. Moral sense, æsthetic sense, love, hunger for knowledge and truth, activity,—these are the saving and ennobling elements in man's life. Out of them grows religion. In the complete elimination of the former aspect and the full and complete development of the latter, lies the culmination of religion.

In the primary stages when the animal is strong in man, religion for him can only be a submission to sacred beliefs and observance of forms and ceremonies. Religion is not real and serious to him. Nevertheless the sincere observance of the forms, and adherence to the beliefs are essentially necessary for him and play an important part in the evolution of his spiritual consciousness. To most persons religion appeals as occasions of festivity and æsthetic enjoyment. Therefore in all countries we have temples, images, mythologies, gorgeous ceremonials and festivals connected with religion. The fact is, *man has to transcend the grossness of matter and train his mind to dwell on finer realities before he can ever hope to be religious.* Art, morality, search for knowledge, intense activity and charity and love help immensely in teaching the mind to feel and perceive finely.

What is art? It is the presentation

of matter and sense objects arrayed in the lustre of the supernatural. We all know why we take food, wear clothes or live in a house. Yet we are always trying to forget the ostensible purposes of these actions. For their immediate objects are gross, however necessary they may be to our life; and we want to forget these material aspects of our life. So we clothe them with art. We seek to submerge the materiality of our eating, clothing or dwelling in the consciousness of superfine beauty. Mere nourishing food is not enough for us. The food must be delectable, having fine form, colour, smell and taste. It must be served in an artistic fashion, in choice plates and dishes. The eating place must be beautiful, and we must converse on interesting things as if conversation were more important and eating only secondary. Our clothes must not be merely enough to protect us from the ravages of weather. They must be beautiful. For the mind, beauty is more important in a cloth than its wearing qualities. Similarly our dwelling places. In this way, we learn to transcend the gross and perceive the finer realities. Thus the mind learns to feel a profound dissatisfaction for the material life and to yearn for the higher realities.

But art by itself is not enough for the elevation of the mind of the common man. It may tend to debilitate also; for beauty is elusive and we may often mistake a phantom for the real. Hence there must also be moral struggle. Only a strong moral consciousness and aspiration after high ideals, not merely a profession thereof, can give wings to our perceptions of beauty and make them soar into the serene heights of spirituality. Devoid of moral consciousness, art often wallows in the mire of earthliness. Morality gives us strength. It teaches us to stand on and live by impersonal principles. Through morality also we overcome the gross and rise to the plane of the fine. Morality gives a correct tone to all our motives and

actions, our labours in and our relations with the world.

Love also equally releases us from the limitations of the gross. Love and service kill the little self and rend asunder the bonds that hold us to the world of matter, to our body.

Similarly knowledge and activity. Knowledge reveals wonders from within the apparently commonplace, and leads us on from the visible and apparent to the world that lies beyond our present conception. And intense activity satisfies and eventually destroys the worldly instincts, and gives us the taste of a higher, finer life. Little things of the world, little acquisitions, exultations over little triumphs, no longer satisfy us. We want expansion and bigger things.

All these forces are working slowly but steadily for the upliftment and freedom of man. *They are impelling him towards real religion.* Without them the intermediate stages between the common man and the religious man cannot be covered. The essential prerequisite of spirituality is the annihilation of the lower self and the desire for earthly things. A mind scattered over a million objects of desire cannot reach towards God. It must unite and propel its scattered rays in one single direction; then only can it reveal the face of God. But such renunciation of desires is not now possible for it. It is too gross; it is almost hopelessly enmeshed in desire; it cannot perceive the finer realities. Art, morality, love, service, knowledge and activity alone can help the mind out of its present earthliness.

But without adherence to a religion and submission to its fundamentals, none of these can be properly effective. In fact, unless we believe in some eternal, ultimate reality, and in the solidarity of life and the universe, art, morality, social service or knowledge cannot properly flourish. We are not speaking here of those exceptional persons who instinctively rise up to the

highest without any conscious admission of religious truths. But most men cannot properly understand or benefit by art, morality or charity, unless they relate these to the principle of Divinity. That is why in all ages we find art, morality and service existing as aspects of religion, connected with its principles and institutions.

So for the benefit of the vast majority of mankind, in order that they may be eventually fit to live religion truly and seriously, it is necessary, absolutely necessary, that our corporate life should be made more and more æsthetic, more morally exalted, more full of charity, love and service, of eagerness for knowledge and truth, and intense activity. *In fact, if men were to be tremendously active, mindful at the same time of art, morality and service, they would do much greater good to themselves than if they were to mumble prayers, visit temples and play at religion as the majority are doing at present.* Unfortunately, however, true moral or æsthetic development, or passion for service, is not possible for them without conscious relations with religious beliefs and institutions. Hence for practical purposes, formal religion, with its dogmas, myths and rituals, must always be; but morality, art, service, industry and knowledge must be developed to their utmost, for these are the real salvation of most men.

In Hindu phraseology, *tamas* (inertia) must be overcome by *rajas* (activity); *rajas* should be conquered by *sattva* (tranquil joy). But *sattva* can grow only gradually. *Sattva*, peacefulness and rest of mind, in which alone Truth and Reality can be properly reflected, cannot be born suddenly. There are gradations, as represented by the mental effect of art, morality, knowledge, love, service, etc.

But why should we insist on art, morality, etc., if religion itself can spiritualise the gross and the material?—it may be asked. The question is



pertinent. When religion becomes institutional, it is affirmed by people as a matter of course. Thus Hindus believe in their religion and accept its teachings as true. There are also rules and customs pertaining to it, which, though they differ with different sections of people and in different places, are yet more or less observed by them as sacred. Even where seriousness about religion is absent, acceptance of beliefs and observation of rules exist. Thus before eating most Hindus offer the food mentally to God. In all affairs of life, such association of the Divine idea with mundane things has become an established rule. Hinduism teaches its votaries to spiritualise life, activities and human relations. This direct relation of earthly things with God through spiritualisation, without the aid of art, etc., no doubt serves to train the mind in feeling and perceiving finer realities.

So long as people believe in religion, no doubt religion itself will greatly help in teaching them fineness of perception. But as religion is not taken seriously by the majority of people, more tangible means, more appealing intermediaries must be found for men and associated with religion. Morality is more real and tangible to most people than the spiritual verities; knowledge is more effective; service is more fruitful. We should therefore lay the utmost emphasis on them in the case of the average man. Spiritualisation of the concerns of life is all right. But most men can only slowly progress that way without substantial aid from morality, art, knowledge, action and service. Is it because Hinduism has been, during the last few centuries, deprived of these aids and

has had to look to religion alone for teaching fineness of perception and feeling, that Hindus to-day are so ineffective and feeble?

If, then, any one were to propose to us that he should enter the religious life, the first thing we would see is whether he had got rid of *tamas*, whether his mind has learnt to perceive and appreciate finer things, if he has a strong moral sense, and if the rays of his mind have been focussed to a narrow circle. These are some of the essential conditions. Lacking them, a man is ill-qualified to take to the religious life. *To such a man, the best advice would be: Go and be active; be moral and serve your fellow-men unselfishly and lovingly.*

Unfortunately there is no existing machinery by which the fulfilment of these conditions can be made obligatory on the candidates for a religious life. Even before we are half prepared, we begin the serious practice of religion. This often results in great confusion of ideas and bitterness of failure. In fact any such clear demarcation and regulation is not possible. The mind is an elusive thing; it is extremely difficult to ascertain its real condition at any time. It often deceives and leads us to paths which perhaps we are scarcely fit to walk. Necessarily there is suffering. Besides, the religious life, like any other vocation, is open to all. It naturally seems tempting to many who are perhaps not yet ready. Yet, we must always think calmly and long before we embrace it. We are sure, if we judge by the standard described above, we shall not go much astray.

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## ASHTAVAKRA SAMHITA

BY SWAMI NITYASWARUPANANDA

### INTRODUCTION

The *Ashtāvakra Samhitā*, or *Ashtāvakra Gītā* as it is sometimes called, is a short treatise on Advaita Vedānta, ascribed to the great sage Ashtāvakra. It consists in all of 302 verses distributed into 21 chapters.

Very little definite is known about Ashtāvakra. His work does not in any way enlighten us or give any clue to his identity. It is presented as a dialogue between him and Janaka. But is this Janaka the same as is met with in the *Rāmāyana* of Vālmiki and the *Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad*? Nor is it certain that our author is the same Ashtāvakra as that of the *Mahābhārata*. But most possibly they are identical; for they both exhibit the same profound knowledge of Brahman.

A very interesting story is given about Ashtāvakra in chapters 132-134 of the Vana Parva of the *Mahābhārata*. Ashtāvakra was born of Kahor and Sujātā. While Ashtāvakra was still in his mother's womb, Kahor was once reciting the Vedas sitting beside his wife. To their great surprise, the child in the womb suddenly cried out: "Father, even lying in my mother's womb I have already learnt all the Vedas through your grace. But I regret that you often make mistakes in your recitation." Kahor took this as a grave insult and cursed him saying that he would be born with eight parts of his body deformed. Accordingly in course of time the child was born with a twisted form and was named Ashtāvakra (Eight-curved). In the meanwhile Kahor went to the court of Janaka to beg money from the king. The king had at that time in his court a great scholar called Vandī, son of King Varuṇa. He was profoundly versed in the Vedas. Kahor was called to a

debate by him, was defeated and thrown into the sea where he had to be engaged as a priest in a sacrifice performed by Varuṇa.

When Ashtāvakra grew to be a lad of twelve and heard of the sad plight of his father, he repaired to the court of Janaka in company with his maternal uncle Svetaketu. Being a mere boy he was not at first allowed entrance into the court, but when he gave proof of his extraordinary learning in the *Śāstras*, he was cordially welcomed. He at once sought out his father's opponent, Vandī, and entered into a debate with him. A wonderful controversy ensued, and the boy of twelve defeated the foremost veteran scholar of the court of Janaka. He rescued his father from the grip of Varuṇa. Kahor was highly satisfied with his son and asked him to bathe in the river Samangā, and lo, he came out of the waters with all his limbs made straight. But his name continued the same for ever.

Though the treatise under discussion is a small one, yet in it Ashtāvakra presents us with the fairest flower of all philosophy and religion. In it he has given us Truth in its highest and purest form, couched in the simplest, but also the most forceful, language possible. He does not enter into any technicality or controversy, nor does he try to refute the tenets of other schools of philosophy and religion. His theme is Advaita. Advaita is ordinarily considered abstruse and too high for the common mind. But his direct presentation has made it easily comprehensible and appealing to even the ordinary understanding.

Ashtāvakra preaches Advaita in its extreme form in his book. Wherever he speaks of the experience of Self-realisation his language becomes rhapsodic.

sodical. Thus: "Oh, wonderful am I! Adoration to myself who have no decay and who survive the destruction of all from Brahmā to the blade of grass." "Oh, wonderful am I! Adoration to myself. None is more capable than I who am bearing the universe for eternity without touching it with the body." He is so much filled with the glory of the Atman that he begins to adore himself. He again and again enjoins upon us to realise the glory of the Self, for, as he says, "duality is the root of all misery and there is no other remedy for it except the knowledge that the visible universe is unreal and that I am Intelligence and Pure Bliss." How to attain to this realisation? Ashtavakra gives a very clear and unambiguous answer. "If you aspire after liberation, my child, shun the objects of the senses as poison." "If you rest in the Self which is Intelligence itself, having detached yourself from the body, you will at once be happy, peaceful and free from bondage." "One who considers oneself free is free indeed as surely as one who looks upon oneself as bound remains bound. As one thinks oneself to be, so does one become—is a saying which is perfectly true." How beautiful and significant is this last utterance! Indeed we can at once realise ourselves as Brahman if we only think ourselves as such. Sri Ramakrishna also used to lay great emphasis on this teaching. He used to say, "He who thinks himself a sinner, a sinner he becomes. He who thinks himself bound, bound he becomes. But he who thinks himself free, free he becomes."

These fundamental truths Ashtavakra describes in various forms and details in his book. He is never tired of describing the glories of the Atman. He calls upon every man to feel the power and majesty that are latent in his own self. It is perhaps therefore that in referring to the Eternal Truth and Reality he always uses the word Atman and very rarely the word Brahman.

We consider the choice of Ashtavakra Samhita with its strong emphasis on Advaita, for presentation to the readers of *Prabuddha Bharata*, as extremely felicitous. For the present age requires nothing more so much as the teaching of Advaita Vedanta. India of all countries needs it most. The depths of degradation into which India has fallen and the innumerable ills to which she is subjected, have made her children lose faith in themselves. If they are to regain their ancient glory, they must acquire faith in themselves by filling themselves with the spirit of Advaita. If they want to effectively remedy the evils that are eating into their very vitals, they can do no better than take Advaita Vedanta as their religion and bring their inner energy to bear upon them. It is Advaita alone that can infuse strength and vitality into us and make us hold our own boldly before the world. The beauty of Advaita is that it can be practised in any condition of life. A religion to be of universal use to mankind must be able to help man wherever he may be, whether in freedom or servitude, in the depths of degradation or on the heights of glory. Advaita alone is such a religion, and hence it occupies the foremost position among the religions of the world.

Advaita teaches that man is Divine. It declares that the soul is pure, omniscient. And if it preaches anything, it is strength, infinite strength and absolute fearlessness. It teaches man to have faith in himself and drive away the superstition that he is weak and incapable. A man that does not believe in a personal God is usually regarded as an atheist, but unbelief in the power of our own self is what Advaita Vedanta calls atheism. If we only believe that we are omnipotent, that all the powers in the universe are already within us, all our weaknesses will at once vanish. By hypnotising ourselves into the belief that we are powerless and ignorant, we are doing mischief not only to ourselves, but also to others by sending weakening

thoughts into the world. A man is great in the proportion he has faith in himself. If India wants to rise again, she has once more to raise the mighty banner of Advaita, for by no other means can she have that immeasurable strength which is so much needed by her children to-day.

This is pre-eminently the age of science. And Advaita of all creeds conforms most to its spirit and is in entire harmony with the results obtained by scientific investigations. Science is nothing but the finding of unity. That religion can be called most perfect and said to be established on the scientific basis, which preaches the One and the only One "from whom this universe with its manifold phenomena has emanated and by knowing whom everything else is known." Science progresses by generalisation. The highest generalisation of Truth and Reality is certainly that which is known as Atman or Brahman. Therefore Advaita alone can be the religion in which this scientific age can find satisfaction.

The whole world stands in need of the grand ideal of universal toleration, and the first step towards that much needed charity is to look kindly upon the religious convictions of others. Nay, we must go further and be of positive help and service to them. Can any religious view except Advaita which regards all religions as different expressions of the same Eternal Reality, beget this unbounded love and charity?

Then again, this world is in the powerful grip of materialism in the present age. Personal religions are finding it hard to fight this grim enemy. History tells us that in the past ages also, Advaita saved India from materialism on at least two occasions, in the form of Buddha's teaching of Nirvâna and Sankara's Transcendental Philosophy.

A similar crisis faces the world now. And Advaitism alone can save it.

We shall publish the translation and annotation of the Samhita with text in Sanskrit character serially every month. We request our readers to pore over every verse and commit it to memory if possible. Swami Vivekananda himself often used to quote from this book which played a rather important part in his early life. In the first days of his acquaintance with Sri Ramakrishna the Swami was in intimate touch with the Braimo Samaj and was under the influence of its ideas and teachings. At that time he would not believe in Advaita at all. But at the very first sight Sri Ramakrishna had seen into his inmost being and found that of all his disciples the Swami was predominantly monistic in temperament, though he himself was unconscious of it at that time. The Swami would naturally resist any monistic teaching from his master. But Sri Ramakrishna overcame this difficulty in a clever way. He had in his room a copy of Ashtavakra Samhita. He would often ask the Swami to read it out to him. After reading a verse or two the Swami would refuse to proceed further. "For," he would say, "it is a sin to say that man is God himself." But the Master would induce him to read on by saying that he was not insisting on his accepting this teaching but only asking him to read it out to him. This was one of the ways in which the Swami was taught Advaita and this book came to have a great influence on his life.

Swami Vivekananda laid great emphasis on Advaita and often declared that it would become the future religion of mankind. He called upon the world to come under its banner and enjoy its inexhaustible blessings. We can do no better than repeat the same call with all the emphasis at our command.

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### In this Number

On the threshold of the new year, we offer our readers and sympathisers our cordial greetings. This is a new year for *Prabuddha Bharata* in a double sense. Not only does it begin another year of its career, but it has also undergone profound changes in its form, as much as to constitute almost a new incarnation for it. The amount of reading matter contained in the present issue exceeds by about two-thirds that of any of the last year's issues. The idea of change was conceived rather too late to afford us sufficient time to bring out all the desired features in the January issue. It has not therefore reached the desired standard which it is expected to do in three or four months.

But the reading matter, we hope, has not been much below the mark. . . . The *Two Unpublished Letters* of SWAMI VIVEKANANDA may be said to have sounded the key-note of the whole number. He indicates clearly the nature of true spirituality, scorning all mysterious cults, and draws out the fundamental distinction between Europe and Asia: "Europe has always been the source of social, and Asia, of spiritual power." . . . We have elaborated this theme more or less in our own article, *Lest We Forget*. Comparisons are odious, they say. But they help us in realising our value and individuality; and it is time we insist on the recognition of our true and exalted position in the assembly of nations. . . . *Notes of Conversations with Swami Turiyananda* will easily make its way into the inmost heart of our readers. The notes are precious and let our readers meditate on them. . . . A VISITOR sent us an account of his impressions of the *Sri Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, Mylapore,*

*Madras*, which we are glad to include in the present number. We may vouch for their correctness. Readers will agree that the Home is a successful educational institution. It has drawn enthusiastic praises from Indians and Westerners, high Government officials and nationalists, alike. The accompanying illustrations are unfortunately not quite up to our expectations. Better photos could not be procured in time. Let us all wish the Home greater and greater prosperity and usefulness. But, then, should not all who can, *help* it materially? . . . . *Europe and the Problem of Asia* by DR. JAGADISAN M. KUMARAPPA, M.A., Ph.D. easily takes the highest place in this number. We beg to introduce the writer to the best and most cordial attention of our readers. He was formerly known as J. J. Cornelius and is a writer of considerable reputation. He was a professor of philosophy at Lucknow University and is a holder of degrees from four American universities. His contributions to some of the best magazines of Europe and America have been highly appreciated. We reproduced one of his articles, *An Oriental Looks at the Christian Missions*, from *Harper's Magazine* in 1927. He also wrote a spirited reply to *Mother India* in *Current History*, a well-known monthly of New York. Our readers may expect to meet him in the pages of *Prabuddha Bharata* also in future. Dr. Kumarappa is saturated with the spiritual idealism of the East; but knowing the international situation as he does, he feels that if Asia is not allowed to pursue her peaceful ways, she may be compelled to take to alien methods, and then woe betide the world. . . . M., a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, has published his diary in Bengali. *Sri Ramakrishna at the Star Theatre* is a chapter translated from it. Many of us are in

the position of Girish Chandra Ghose. The Master's instructions to him, therefore, apply to us aptly. Let us remember that Mr. Ghose became later on one of the greatest saints of Bengal. . . . ANANDA contributes in this issue the first of his series of articles on *Practice of Religion*. In *In the Outer Court* he keeps us in the outer court of religion indeed. But he provokes thought. Let us hope he will very soon lead us on to the threshold. In the meantime he asks us to request our readers earnestly to send their opinions and criticisms to him through us, and also questions on practical religion. He hopes to take them up in course of his next articles. We request our readers to earnestly join in this profitable discussion. . . . SWAMI NITYASWARUPANANDA has given us only his *Introduction to Aṣṭāvakra Samhita* in this issue. The text with translation and notes will follow in the next issues. Let us hope his earnest call to hark to the message of Advaita Vedānta will evoke enthusiastic response in the readers' hearts. His plea is indeed strong and arguments assuredly convincing. . . . In *Notes and Comments*, we have succeeded in expressing ourselves on only one burning topic of the day. We do not meddle with politics, nor do we believe much in its efficacy. It is culture and of culture, the spiritual basis, that interests us truly. The question of Independence has its cultural aspect. In our opinion, it is this aspect which should be considered first; for in culture abides the life-principle of a people.

### Cultural Independence

By the time this reaches our readers, the Indian National Congress will have ended its annual session in Calcutta and come to a decision as to which India should strive for, the status of a Dominion within the British Empire or complete Independence.

This question of the future status of India has far-reaching cultural implica-

tions,—the political aspect is only secondary. One interpretation of those implications was given by the late Mr. C. R. Das in his famous Faridpur address in these words:

"No Nation can live in isolation. Dominion Status, while it affords complete protection to each constituent composing the great Commonwealth of Nations, called the British Empire, secures to each the right to realize itself, develop itself and fulfil itself. . . . Therefore it expresses all the elements of Swaraj. To me the idea is specially attractive, because of its deep spiritual significance. I believe in world-peace, in the ultimate federation of the world. The great Commonwealth of Nations called the British Empire—a federation of diverse races, each with its distinct life, distinct civilization, its distinct mental outlook—if properly led, is bound to make a lasting contribution to the great problem that awaits the statesmen, the problem of knitting the world into the greatest federation the mind can conceive, the federation of the human race. . . . Independence to my mind is a narrower ideal than Swaraj."

Mr. Das's statement perhaps represents best the opinions of those Indians who sincerely believe in the utility of the British connection. We discern two elements in it: one is a worldly consideration,—the advantages of the protection of British arms,—a consideration which seems highly selfish; and the other is the spiritual benefit that may eventually accrue to humanity from the organization called the British Empire.

This spiritual interpretation of the British Empire is apparently fine and cogent. A little examination, however, reveals its inner hollowness. Obviously the validity of the British Empire does not lie in itself; it lies in the prospect of its leading to world-federation, either by being a model to the other nations of the world or by becoming the nucleus of the world-federation itself. By itself, it may, if not properly directed, prove a menace to world-peace. But if it seeks pre-eminently and sincerely the peace and good of

the world, it may certainly prove a great boon to humanity.

Suppose it is sincere in its desire for world-peace and world-good. We do not think the British Empire as a mere model will do any appreciable good. As a nucleus for the world Empire, it is full of hope. But can we hope that other nations will join the British Empire? The very first consideration would be the question of allegiance to the British crown. Can we expect the U. S. A. or European countries to join the British Empire and own allegiance to the British King? If the British Empire is to grow to a federation of world-nations, *absolute* equality must be assured to the federated nations.

Let us suppose that the above considerations prevail. The next question would be : What is the motive of this federation? Every union, especially that of nations, must have some binding purpose behind it. Unless we can create some sufficiently powerful incentive and ideal, no federation of nations can be possible. It is true that world-forces, especially, the economic ones, are bringing nations closer and closer; but they are also inspiring the keenest rivalries among them. The motive of union must be noble and spiritual. There cannot be any true and lasting unity among those otherwise minded. Will the Western nations conceive such a spiritual policy? We confess that our present knowledge of them does not make us hope that they will. Without this spiritual motive of union, there is therefore no possibility of there being a world-federation. Should not the Western nations change a great deal before the desire for world-peace or world-good can become their guiding policy? Is there even a distant prospect that they will change in that direction? How then, can we hope that the British Empire will one day grow to a federation of the human race?

Still let us suppose that the Western nations have learnt the lesson of their

Master, Jesus Christ, and have become honest and peace-loving. Is there a chance the British Empire will become a world-federation? Honest people do not require pacts. Their intrinsic goodness is a sufficient surety of their good behaviour. If nations grow good, they will not require any formal federation.

The fact is, the idealism that dreams of the British Empire as the nucleus of a World Empire, is inspired by worldly wisdom. True wisdom does not put so much faith on external organization. It seeks the genuine article in the *mind* of nations, not in their form.

India's policy is pre-eminently spiritual. So far as we can see, we do not discern any common spiritual factor between India and Great Britain. The British are materialistic; we are not and we do not want to be. We believe above all in spiritual integrity; the British as a race are scarcely responsive to spiritual realities. Where is the common interest? And without a common interest, what is the use of any federation?

It is theoretically possible that that interest may grow in future,—the British may one day incline to spirituality. But are they making any sincere attempt to reach that consummation? Do they believe in the supremacy of the spiritual vision? Unless they change their individual and national outlook fundamentally, India can never sympathise with the prevailing trend of thought and outlook of the British people.

Thus, in so far as the cultural aspect is concerned, we have to conclude that whether India is to be benefited by her connection with the British or not, depends essentially on Great Britain herself. It depends on her adopting the spiritual view-point of life. It is for her to say if she would have India as her spiritual sister. India has gladly accepted all that are noble and good in the Western culture. Let the West accept all that

are good and great in India. Let Great Britain learn spiritual lessons from India. On this mutual acceptance the permanence of the British connection rests. India's path is clear. Whoever is spiritual is her friend and ally, and whoever is otherwise is not so.

Though we consider that without a community of interests and spiritual idealism, no federation is of any avail, yet we are ready to admit that even a formal federation has some value, however insignificant: India may remain

within the British Empire with the hope that she will one day grow strong enough to influence the policy of the whole Empire. But it is essential that the Empire should show a desire to benefit by India's spiritual wisdom and that India should be certain of absolute equality in all respects and freedom of thought and action.

This is so far as the cultural aspect is concerned. As regards the political aspect, the politicians know best what to determine.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### R. K. Mission Activities

The following is extracted from a short report of the work and progress of the R. K. Mission from January to September, 1928. The report was placed before the members of the Mission, assembled in an extraordinary general meeting, held at the Belur Math on the 28th October, 1928, and has been sent to us by the Secretary for publication:

The most pressing and urgent work in our hands to-day is the famine relief work which we started in Bankura and Balurghat in May and September respectively. Till now we have distributed 2204 Mds. of rice to 6175 recipients belonging to 265 villages. The sum of Rs. 22,833/- has been received for the work, while we have spent Rs. 23,991/-. The deficit has been advanced from the Provident Relief Fund of the Mission at present and there is a promise of Rs. 800/-, from one Guzrati gentleman. Twenty-two workers were sent to the field, nine of them have come back, of whom six have been attacked with fever. We shall have to continue the work up to the second week of November. In this connection I am glad to announce that an appeal that was sent to the members of the Mission for co-operation in this relief work has been warmly responded to.

From the Poor Fund of the Belur Math the sum of Rs. 897/6/- has been spent to help 47 monthly recipients, and 25 needy persons have been temporarily helped. The demand being very great on this fund, we should try to strengthen it.

On account of the gradual increase in the number of patients, the present Dispensary building at the Belur Math needs an extension very badly. You will be glad to know that a kind friend has donated Rs. 2,000/- to form a nucleus for the building fund, and it has been proposed to construct a new building on the plot of land just opposite the present Dispensary.

The progress of the Industrial School at the Belur Math had been so long hindered for want of funds. I am glad to inform you that the Government has promised a monthly aid of Rs. 100/- and granted Rs. 350/- for equipment. Arrangements are being made to equip the school with a suitable staff of teachers.

The Home of Service at Benares has acquired a plot of land for the extension of the ward for women with a grant of Rs. 25,000/- from the Government on condition that we shall raise an equal sum from the public.

The Sevashrama in Allahabad has completed the new indoor ward. The new ward in Brindaban is also completed. The foundation stone of a ward for women in the Rangoon Sevashrama has been laid by His Excellency the Governor of Burma.

His Excellency Sir Robert A. Stanley, K.C.M.G., the Governor of Ceylon, was pleased to open a newly constructed building of our Mission Hindu School at Trincomalee on the 5th July. You will be glad to know that schools have been established in Ceylon through the efforts of Swamis



Vipulananda and Avinashananda, who are trying to meet the educational needs of the Island. An attempt is being made to have the Mission registered in Ceylon by an ordinance passed by the legislature of the Government of Ceylon.

With contributions from Swami Madhavananda, the head of the Vedanta Society in San Francisco, U. S. A., a new fund has been started here for the spread of primary education in backward villages. Four schools have already been started and the fund will allow us to open one more, which will be done soon. The above schools are located at Mankhanda of 24-Perags., Bannukha of Bankura, Beldah of Midnapur and Charipur of Sylhet, and supervised by our Ashramas at Sarisla, Koalpara, Contai and Habiganj respectively. Of these the school at Mankhanda is meant for girls and the same will be the case with the one we mean to open at Brahmanakirta of Dacca. Besides these, we have 22 more free primary schools (including night schools) directly managed by our Ashramas.

Swami Madhavananda has promised another regular contribution towards organising lantern lectures for the spread of mass education. The first instalment of his contribution has already been received and though efforts are being made to finish all preliminary arrangements and begin the work under the supervision of Swami Nirvedananda by January next, it may take three or four months more to actually start the work.

You will all be glad to learn that Sj. Rajani Mohan Chatterjee, Solicitor of Calcutta, has made a free gift of nearly 20 Bighas of land at Gauripur, near Dum Dum Cant., with a contribution of the sum of Rs. 30,000 for its development, to open a vocational section of our Students' Home in Calcutta. We have now altogether 7 Students' Homes started by our different centres in India and Ceylon.

Our branch at Baranagore has taken up the construction of two building blocks on the land given to it by Messrs. D. N. Roy, G. N. Roy and their brothers. The completion of the structures that will be necessary to have the Ashrama removed to its own site, will require about Rs. 1,50,000 more.

A building has been constructed for the workers of our Vidyapith at Doohar by the kind help of Messrs. Bholanath Dutt & Sons,

the well-known paper merchants of Calcutta; and another building for the use of the boys by the kind contribution of the worthy sons of late Buto Kristo Pal of Calcutta has now been completed.

Preaching activities of the Mission in India and abroad have greatly increased from the beginning of the current year.

During the last several months Swami Nirmalananda, who is in charge of the Ramakrishna Ashrama at Bangalore and under whose fostering care a number of Ashramas have grown in Malabar, Cochin, Travancore and Coorg, toured through Northern and Southern India to the great benefit of the places visited. His tour included also Rangoon, Mandalay and Akyab. Everywhere he created a great interest through his conversations and discourses.

After a period of incessant activities in Delhi, Swami Sharvananda spent the last summer in Mysore State. At Bangalore the Swami delivered several lectures. He gave one also at Nandi Hills. As many as eighteen discourses were given by the Swami in the city of Mysore, and invited by Mr. Shuistry, Professor of Persian and Arabic in the Maharajah's College, he delivered an address in Hindi at the Shia Mosque.

Swami Vireswarananda, President, Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, toured through several places of the South in the last winter and visited Ichhapuram, Berhampore, Paralakimedi, Chicacole, Vizianagaram, Rajahmundry, Bezwada, Ellore, Anantapur, and Cuddapah, and went as far as Mangalore. In many places he delivered lectures on the ideals of vedanta and held discourses and conversations.

Swami Yatiswarananda, the President of our Madras Math, went to Ceylon and gave lectures and held discourses in several places.

The Sannyasins and Brahmacharins of Belur Math and our Centres in Calcutta have been conducting many scriptural classes, and have delivered several lectures in different parts of Calcutta and its suburbs. They were also sent out to many parts of Bengal to spread the ideas and ideals of the Mission. Being invited by the Centenary Celebration Committee of the Brahmo Samaj, Swami Nikhilananda represented the Mission and read a paper on the 19th August, on the religious progress within the last hundred years in Bengal with special reference to the

**Ramakrishna Movement.** Our centre at Baliati organised a village workers' conference to discuss the educational, sanitary and religious problems of the neighbouring villages, and two Swamis were deputed from the Belur Math to help them in their deliberations.

The following magazines are regularly conducted from our several centres as a part of our preaching work.

The *Udbodhan*—in Bengali, *Prabuddha Bharata* in English and *Samanway* in Hindi, from Calcutta; *The Vedanta Kesari* in English, *Sri Ramakrishna Vijayam* in Tamil, and *Prabuddha Kerlam* in Malayalam from the South; *The Morning Star* from Patna, and *The Message of the East* from U. S. A., both in English.

In America Swami Madhavananda and Swami Dayananda are conducting the Vedanta Society in San Francisco. Swami Bodhananda, assisted by Swami Gnaneshwarananda, is working in New York. Swami Paramananda is in charge of two centres, one at La Crescenta and another in Boston. Swami Prabhavananda has been the head of the centre at Portland. Swami Akhilananda has recently opened a new centre at Providence, in Rhode Island, U. S. A., and he has received substantial help for the work. There is a proposal for starting another centre at St. Louis. Swami Paramananda has recently opened a temple called "Viswa Mandir" in La Crescenta, which is to be the place of worship for people of all faiths, Hindus, Christians, Mohammedans, Buddhists, Jains, and others. The temple contains portraits of the prophets of many religions of the world.

The Ramkrishna Mission has been registered in the Straits Settlements and under that a centre has been recently started in Singapore, with Swami Adyananda in charge.

In India we have opened new centres in Delhi, Nagpur and Ranchi.

A plot of land has been given to our Ashrama in Mysore by the Mysore Government and the construction of a building is under project.

Before I close I should like to remind you of the great responsibility that has been placed on us by the great founder of this organisation of which we are privileged to be members. May we never lack energy and enthusiasm to prove equal to that great trust.

#### R. K. Ashrama, Mysore

The Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Mysore, which was opened in 1925 has been feeling the need of a building of its own for the continuance and extension of its activities and the City Improvement Trust Board readily offered an extensive site in Vani Vilas Mohalla. A building committee with Dharmaprakasa D. Banumiah as president was formed in July last and the foundation stone of the Ashrama was laid on Monday 19th Nov., 1928 by Swami Sharvananda. Mr. Banumiah and other members of the committee received the Swami at a specially erected pandal on the extensive site. Many prominent persons of the city were present at the function. The members of the Ramakrishna Bhakta Mandali, an association of the students of the city, did excellent volunteer service in arranging the function. A nicely decorated picture of Sri Ramakrishna was installed in the pandal. According to orthodox Agamic rituals the Swami performed the elaborate puja and homa, which lasted for about two hours. Afterwards the Swami amidst the prayers of the gathering, laid the foundation stone in position at 11-30 A.M. After the close of the auspicious ceremony and the distribution of Prasada, the gathering dispersed. The building committee thanked the Swami who had found time in the midst of his very pressing engagements in Northern India to inaugurate their work at Mysore. The Swami left for Nagpur on the 19th night.

#### R. K. Students' Home, Bangalore

We have received a short report of the above institution for the year 1927-1928. The object of this Home is to supply poor students with food and lodging free and make arrangements for their education along with training in character-building. The work the Home is doing is so much needed that whatever has been done by it deserves public help and encouragement. But it is a pity, as the comparative statement shows, that the number of regular subscribers is rather on the decrease than on the increase. The Home accommodated during the year 15 students of whom all but one were receiving higher education in colleges. The receipts during the year amounted to Rs. 1,661-6-5, the opening balance was Rs. 3,786-3-0 and the expenses during the year were Rs. 1,680-3-0. The average cost per boarder was Rs. 10-11-0.

It is worth mentioning that during the year the boarders formed themselves into a debating society and held 18 meetings at which many interesting subjects were discussed.

We wish the authorities of the Home should put forth their best energies to improve the scope and position of the Home.

#### **Vivekananda Society, Jamshedpur**

A report of the work of the above Society for the year 1927 reached us some time back. In the year under review it passed through the eighth year of its activities and was affiliated with the Ramakrishna Mission as one of its branch centres. The work of the society falls under three heads : (i) Religious, (ii) Educational and (iii) Social and Philanthropic. The religious work consisted of holding Gita classes in the Society's premises and also in the L. Town, of arranging occasional religious lectures by eminent scholars and of observing birthday anniversaries of Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda and other saints. The educational activities of the society have been very prominent. It maintained two free libraries and reading rooms, three free primary schools and a free students' home. 90 children received free education in the three primary schools. Besides these, a night school was started with 21 boys at the end of the year. The total expenditure on the schools during the year was Rs. 868-13-6. The number of boys in the students' home, of whom the majority belonged to the aboriginal and depressed classes, was 13. An experiment was made to train them under the direct guidance of the residential workers and it proved a success. The total expenditure for the students' home was Rs. 655-9-0. The social and philanthropic activities of the society consisted of nursing patients, cremating the

dead, giving occasional help to needy and stranded persons and helping the Central Flood Relief Committee of Jamshedpur in their relief operations. The total cash receipts of the society including previous year's balance amounted to Rs. 5,314-13-1 and the total expenditure came up to Rs. 4,414-3-3 leaving a balance of Rs. 900-9-10.

We congratulate the society on its noble work in various directions and wish it greater and greater success every year.

#### **The Ramkrishna Mission Bankura and Balurghat Famine Relief**

An abstract of account of the Ramkrishna Mission Relief Work in Bankura and Balurghat, is given below :

##### **RECEIPTS**

By donations—Rs. 24,874-5-0. Sale proceeds—Rs. 296-13-3. Total Rs. 25,171-2-3.

##### **PAYMENTS**

Rice for recipients—Rs. 17,880-4-6; salt—Rs. 36-12-0; cloths—Rs. 651-6-0; sacks—Rs. 91-3-0; transit charges (freight, cart, boat, cooly etc.)—Rs. 676-8-9; travelling and inspection charges—Rs. 552-15-6; equipment (trunks, lanterns, utensils, curtain, hyke etc.)—Rs. 569-12-6; establishment (lighting, salary etc.)—Rs. 313-3-0; stationery—Rs. 81-7-0; postage, telegram, M. O. Comm. etc.—Rs. 131-8-6; printing charges—Rs. 23-1-0; miscellaneous—Rs. 19-11-6; pecuniary help—Rs. 219-0-0; medical relief—Rs. 34-4-6; workers' expense (food, cloths, shoes, umbrellas, medicines etc.)—Rs. 569-12-6 (for 22 workers); total—Rs. 21,786-10-6; balance Rs. 3,385-7-9, deposited in the provident relief fund of the Mission.

(Sd.) SUDDHANANDA,  
Secretary, R. K. Mission.

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“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।”

“Arise! Awake! And stop not till the Goal is reached.”

## UNPUBLISHED LETTERS OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

### VII

(To an Englishman)

New York,

9th August 1895.

. . . . It is only just that I should try to give you a little of my views. I fully believe that there are periodic ferments of religion in human society, and that such a period is now sweeping over the educated world. While each ferment, moreover, appears broken into various little bubbles, these are all eventually similar, showing the cause or causes behind them to be the same. That religious ferment which at present is everyday gaining a greater hold over thinking men, has this characteristic, that all the little thought-whirlpools into which it has broken itself, declare one single aim—a vision and a search after the Unity of Being. On plains physical, ethical and spiritual, an ever-broadening generalisation—leading up to a concept of Unity Eternal—is in the air; and this being so, all the movements of the time may be taken to represent, knowingly or unknowingly, the noblest philosophy of the unity man ever had—the Adwaita-Vedanta.

Again, it has always been observed that as a result of the struggles of the various fragments of thought in a given epoch, one bubble survives. The rest only arise to melt into it, and form a single great wave, which sweeps over society with irresistible force.

In India, America, and England (the countries I happen to know about) hundreds of these are struggling at the present moment. In India, dualistic formulae are already on the wane, the Adwaitas alone hold the field in force. In America, many movements are struggling for the mastery. All these represent Adwaita thought more or less, and that series which is spreading most rapidly, approaches nearer to it than any of the others. Now if anything was ever clear to me, it is that one of these must survive, swallowing up all the rest, to be the power of the future. Which is it to be?

Referring to history, we see that only that fragment which is fit will

survive, and what makes fit to survive but *character*? Adwaita will be the future religion of thinking humanity. No doubt of that. And of all the sects, they alone shall gain the day, who are able to show most character in their lives—no matter how far they may be.

Let me tell you a little personal experience. When my Master left the body, we were a dozen penniless and unknown young men. Against us were a hundred powerful organisations, struggling hard to nip us in the bud. But Ramakrishna had given us one great gift, the desire, and the life-long struggle, not to talk alone, but *to live the life*. And to-day all India knows and reverences the Master, and the truths he taught are spreading like wild fire. Ten years ago, I could not get a hundred persons together to celebrate his birthday anniversary. Last year there were fifty thousand.

Neither numbers, nor powers, nor wealth, nor learning, nor eloquence, nor anything else will prevail, but *purity, living the life*, in one word, *anubhuti*, realisation. Let there be but a dozen such lion-souls in each country, lions who have broken their own bonds, who have touched the Infinite, whose whole soul is gone to *Brahman*, who care neither for wealth nor power nor fame, and these will be *enough* to shake the world.

Here lies the secret. Says Patanjali, the father of Yoga: "When a man rejects all the superhuman powers, then he attains to the cloud of virtue." He sees God. He becomes God, and helps others to become the same. This is all I have to preach. Doctrines have been expounded enough. There are books by the million. Oh, for an ounce of practice!

As to societies and organisations, these will come of themselves. Can there be jealousy where there is nothing to be jealous of? The names of those who will wish to injure us will be legion. But is not that the surest

sign of our having the truth? The more I have been opposed, the more my energy has always found expression. I have been driven away without a morsel of bread: I have been feasted and worshipped by princes. I have been slandered by priests and laymen alike. But what of it? Bless them all! They are my very self. And have they not helped me by acting as a spring-board, from which my energy could take higher and higher flights?

. . . . . I have discovered one great secret—I have nothing to fear from *talkers* of religion. And the great ones who realise—they become enemies to none! Let talkers talk! They know no better! Let them have their fill of name and fame and money and woman. Hold we on to realisation, to being Brahman, to becoming Brahman. Let us hold on to truth unto death, and from life to life! Let us pay not the least attention to what others say, and if, after a life-time's effort, one, only one, soul can break the fetters of the world and be free, WE HAVE DONE OUR WORK. Hari Om!

. . . . . One word more. Doubtless I do love India. But everyday my sight grows clearer. What is India, or England, or America to us? We are the servants of that God who by the ignorant is called MAN. He who pours water at the root, does he not water the whole tree?

There is but one basis of well-being, social, political, or spiritual, to know that I and my brother are *one*. This is true for all countries and all people. And Westerners, let me say, will realise it more quickly than Orientals, who have almost exhausted themselves in formulating the idea and producing a few cases of individual realisation.

Let us work without desire for name or fame or rule over others. Let us be free from the tripple bonds of lust, greed of gain, and anger. And the truth is with us!

## SPIRITUALISING NATIONALISM

By THE EDITOR

I

How indeed can we spiritualise politics and industrialism?—This is a question which occurs again and again to the national workers; and a right and convincing answer is urgently needed before they can face their duty with a courageous heart and undimmed enthusiasm. India has this 'weakness',—she cannot follow a programme with whole-souled devotion unless it is based on and inspired by a high spiritual ideal. The history of the past national movements also points to this peculiarity. Mahatma Gandhi's Non-violent Non-co-operation movement was a noble attempt at founding political and industrial activities on purely moral and spiritual grounds. Had this movement succeeded, Mahatmaji would have solved a great problem that stands as a lion in the path of the national workers. Unfortunately his theories have failed to prove their efficacy, and we are still more beset with doubts and hesitations.

This problem must not be understood to be merely academical. It is real, intensely real and practical. There is not the least doubt that the majority of thinking Indians feel that India's ideal can only be spiritual, however defective and vague their comprehension of that spiritual ideal may be. This allegiance to spirituality and recognition of it as the highest and only true value of life is instinctive with every Indian; it flows in his blood and pulsates in his every breath. He feels that the only thing worth striving for is the Eternal; the one thing worth realising is his immortal spiritual nature. And he knows that all other achievements are as nothing compared with these. If the devotion of the

modern Indian to spirituality is so passionate, no less passionate is his devotion to his motherland, no less anguished is his feeling for her economical, political and social degradation. India must be raised, he feels, and that early, before she is done to death by foreign exploitation. Her dishonour fills his heart with extreme agony and above all he feels that it is because of her political and economic subjection, that the world dares to-day to laugh at her cherished ideals and drag her highest achievements in the mire.

But along with this feeling for India's external degradation, there is also the conviction that in this imperfect world where evil and wickedness flourish better than good and honesty, political and industrial improvements are scarcely possible along the path of moral purity and spiritual excellence alone. If we strictly adhere to moral principles in our political and economic activities, we may grow morally and spiritually, but there is little chance of freeing the country of foreign dominance. "The wicked have to be fought with wicked means", this adage seems extremely apposite to the national situation. In fact, history has not yet shown any remarkable example of morality ever triumphing in the political and industrial world. Efficiency which is scarcely moral in character, has alone held sway there. Has India also to follow suit? It seems there is no other way. If that be so, how then can we at the same time be faithful to our spiritual ideals? Shall we sacrifice our national ideas for the sake of India's external prosperity? *No, that cannot be.* Are we then to spiritualise politics? How can that be accomplished?—This then is the crucial question.

## II

It has been said that religion has been the key-note of India's national life from times immemorial. India then must have somehow spiritualised politics, etc. in her past. Let us see how she did it and if we can derive any light therefrom for our present guidance.

We must remember at the outset that in the past also, India felt the conflict between the claims of ideals and realities as we are doing now,—may be in a lesser measure than at present. But the conflict was there. Then also the quest after material prosperity and secular achievement was found to be invested with a sufficient amount of evil which refused to be easily spiritualised. But India found a way out of the difficulty in the following manner. Her secret was the *Varnāshrama Dharma*. According to Varnashrama Dharma, every man had his duties fixed for him by the regulations of the caste in which he was born. That meant two things: Firstly, *he* had not to find out his duties. Certain things were presented to him as his duties. He therefore had not the responsibility of judging their worthiness. This on the surface appears to be too much arbitrary and calculated to deaden the conscience. But the Hindu sociologists were careful enough to see that the caste prescriptions did not go against the predominant tendencies of the majority of the members belonging to that caste. In fact the duties were not deliberately prescribed at all. Groups of persons took up certain professions according to their temperaments and necessity. What was later on done was that they were asked to stick to those without encroaching upon the provinces of others and hand them down to posterity. Not that the professions and pursuits chosen by and allotted to the castes were always 'moral' in an absolute sense. Of the Brahmins and the Sudras, it may be said, that their functions were pre-eminently 'moral'.

The Sudras mostly were content to serve: that might not have been elevating, but was not certainly immoral. The Brahmins' duty was of course intellectual and spiritual pursuits mainly and was thus free from moral conflict. The Vaishyas and the Kshatriyas, however, did not find their functions so free of moral blame. The Vaishyas,—the greater ones amongst them, had to exploit other people; and exploitation, they were sophisticated enough to know, was morally bad. The Kshatriyas found themselves still more beset with moral conflicts. Their function was to do *himsā*, violence, to invade and to kill. Yet this moral conflict did not seem to trouble the caste men and women much. Was it because their moral sense was dead? Not so. The secret lay in a true understanding of the import of moral living. There are no doubt certain absolute standards of morality. But when we come to the *practice* of morality, we find that those absolute standards do not always help us. If the end of human life is the realisation of one's spiritual self, then it is necessary that the *samskāras* or tendencies that are obstructing the beatific vision should be eliminated. The means of eliminating these is for the most men their working out. The *samskaras* have to be exercised, moulded and refined, and thus eliminated. So it comes to this that if a man has strong hankering for wealth, the best thing for him would be to properly work it out, so that he may later on realise the vision of his higher self. Here exploitation is his duty. To do all that is needed for the realisation of one's higher self,—be it apparently good or evil,—is one's paramount duty. Similarly of the Kshatriya. He has an aggressive spirit. If he is to realise his spiritual self, he must get rid of it by properly working it out. Through *pravṛtti* to *nivṛtti*. To kill and triumph is the duty of a Kshatriya. So this exploitation of the Vaishya and the violence of the Kshatriya are not really speaking immoral; at least they will not

injure them. If a man lives externally a most moral life and is yet full of base tendencies, he is a *mithyāchāri*; he clogs the progress of his soul by such external abstention; he is doing harm to himself, and his real and highest duty is to express himself in action, and through such properly regulated expression, get rid of his evil tendencies and rise to a higher level of feeling and consciousness. That which helps the elevation of consciousness, is moral; that which retards it, is immoral. Moralists commit a great blunder when they think that morality is the same for all, in both import and expression.

Behind caste prescriptions there were these considerations. Therefore the law-givers assured the castes that the faithful fulfilment of their respective functions was their highest and most moral duty, and that they must never take to the functions of others, however exalted those might appear to them. This philosophy of caste had a wonderful psychological effect and it is this with which we are mainly concerned here. We have mentioned before that one effect of the Varnashrama Dharma was that individuals had not to think out their duties for themselves. That meant, as we can now infer, that the apparent evil aspects of their duties did not affect them in an adverse way. They felt no psychological conflict. They took to their duties whole-heartedly and with undimmed courage and enthusiasm. Their homage to them was not divided by the consciousness of higher moral standards. And it was well that it was so. For such a consciousness of higher standards, when one is decidedly unfit to actually live by them, weakens terribly, paralyses action, and hampers growth. The one thing needful there-

fore in thus neutralising moral conflict is the psychological sanction, a spontaneous feeling that one's duty is as sacred as worship and is the means of the highest realisation, however profane and evil it might appear to some external observers.\*

Secondly, the promulgators of the Varnashrama Dharma found that the spiritualisation of the everyday practical life of the majority of individuals would become much easier if they could be spared the evil aspects of worldly life to a great degree. How much wickedness lies behind political and industrial prosperity, is apparent to-day to every one. In the past also, the same kind of wickedness, if not in the same measure, existed. If every citizen of the state were to think about and maintain those wicked activities, it would certainly have been hard for individuals to easily spiritualise their life and activities. India therefore spared the people the worries of statecraft, leaving these primarily to the king and his ministers. The people were free to live and regulate their life according to the high spiritual ideals. The king bore the burden of statecraft and diplomacy. Kings had always to dabble in many evil things. Politics in no age has been a moral pursuit. But the books and traditions were emphatic that if a king in discharging his duties had to perform heinous things, he was not to suffer for that. It was his duty, and as such could not affect him adversely. Here also the psychological sanction came of immense help.

Of course in this age of democracy, such concentration of political functions in the king alone is not possible. Now the king's functions have to be shared by all citizens. This has made the

\* To obviate misunderstanding, we must mention here that the Hindu law-givers were not unconscious of the danger of thus making light of what were undoubtedly evil in many of the caste duties and neutralising moral conflict of the individuals. We have mentioned why such neutralisation was rather beneficial to the many. If there still lurked any moral danger in such prescriptions, it was provided for by the doctrine of non-attachment with which every man and woman was asked to perform his or her duties. This non-attachment invested every one with a supreme spiritual strength and illumination.



spiritualisation of national service still more difficult. Add to this the evils that attend the acquisition of industrial prosperity. Without extension of commerce no nation can now be great. And commerce cannot flourish in this age, without exploiting other nations. Yet, yet, we *know* we must have to face these and besmirk our hands with their blackness.

### III

Our study of our past experience in spiritualisation has given us two solid facts: (1) if we have an intense longing for certain things, which we cannot reason away, but must possess and enjoy before we can transcend them, to acquire it is our highest duty and is therefore quite moral; and (2) we must create a wide-spread and deep-rooted psychological sanction for it in order to avoid weakening moral conflict. If the service of the nation can evoke the necessary enthusiasm and psychological sanction, then the evils attending it will not affect us immorally and will not therefore clash against the spiritual ideals. Can we say this much of national service?

Unfortunately the very ideal of nationalism is still an object of criticism and discussion in several influential quarters of India. We shall here refer to Rabindranath Tagore and Mahatma Gandhi. Rabindranath does not uphold nationalism. He is for internationalism. He however does not appear to have made his position very clear in all its bearings. Certainly he wants the political freedom of his country. But the way to it he seems to think to lie through social, economical and cultural regeneration. The direct fight with the powers that he does not appear to have his enthusiastic support. What again are his ideas about the industrial development of India? He is in favour of co-operative movement. Does he disapprove of big-scale industrialism without which, it scarcely appears, India will ever be rich

enough to stand the onslaughts of foreign nations? It is clear, however, that his is a partly questioning voice against nationalism.

A much greater influence is that of Mahatma Gandhi. He passionately seeks the political freedom of India. He also wants her economic and social regeneration. But he is thoroughly antiquated in his views about the economic uplift of India. His doctrine of non-violence as applied to the political struggle is well-known. In this it cannot be said he has the country behind him. Indians accept it as rather an expedient than a principle. Mahatmaji believes in it as a principle. As regards the industrial revival of India, he certainly holds quite unique views, directly opposed to the present tendencies of mankind. The philosophy of *charka* lies in the varnashrama dharma. Mahatmaji wants to revive the old idea of decentralisation and simplicity. India's economic revival should not be at the cost of other nations. India must not exploit others; for that would be immoral and against the spiritual ideals of India. So India's industrialism should not be after the big-scale pattern of the West. None should encroach economically upon his neighbour; so that there should be no competition. This was the underlying principle of the economic aspect of the caste system. Mahatmaji wants to eliminate competition in the acquisition of wealth; but he does not advocate the traditional view of the caste system, namely, that none should *practise* others' professions. Here Mahatmaji puts forward a novel view. He says that though one may not *earn* money by practising other caste professions, one may, if one likes, take to them as honorary professions. But Mahatmaji forgets that this will create a state of great disorder and introduce competition. There is in every locality a certain amount of demand for certain professions. If any outsider comes to fulfil them gratis, he will thereby deprive the legitimate professionals of their custom, compel-

ling them to take to other means of earning, though he may not himself profit anything. Altogether Mahatmaji stands less for nationalism as it is commonly understood than for a certain view of 'Truth which he is trying to realise himself and persuading the nation to accept. The majority of Indians, though absolutely faithful to the high spiritual ideals of India, yet want their country to become politically independent', industrially as prosperous as the most prosperous nation on earth and culturally supreme. They are content to follow the ordinary means of achieving these, with all the necessary evils attendant on them; and they are trying through all these evils to rise up to the pristine purity of the national ideals. Neither 'Tagore nor Mahatmaji gives them adequate help in these respects.

Apart from these objections, the ideal of nationalism has its antagonists in the growing internationalism of the West and in the labour union movement of the world. Though these have not yet become sufficiently effective, yet they are bound to grow in strength with the passing of days and react on nationalism; and we cannot ignore them in determining the future of nationalism.

#### IV.

Amidst these confusions, the nationalism of Swami Vivekananda and the spirit and attitude that lay behind it appear as a powerful and steady beacon, reconciling the present tendencies of nationalism with its future, and also with the spiritual ideals of India. Swamiji believed that the industrialism of the West will have its full sway in India, however vicious it might be; and he believed that India would become a great industrial nation. He wanted so much that Indians should visit the West and learn the secrets of modern civilisation with its wonderful powers of organisation and efficiency. On his way to America he wrote a letter to his

Madrasee disciples from Japan, in which he asked them to come and study the rapid modernisation of Japan and take lessons therefrom for the elevation of India. In this, modern India is walking faithfully behind the Swami. He felt all the iniquities of present-day industrialism, with its degradation of the mind and exploitation of the weak. But he also felt that, good or evil, India cannot escape it, and the best thing for her would be to face it and make the best of it. So he called to his countrymen to learn these things from the West and march ahead to the van of industrial nations. Modern India thus finds a strong support in Swamiji in her bid for industrial greatness. Perhaps it is not known to many that in his scheme of an ideal Math of the Ramakrishna Order, one of the first items was the establishment of a well-equipped technological college.

Similarly it cannot be said that he cared much either to stick to the old caste system (as Mahatmaji is doing) or either to destroy it as ultra-reformers want to. He knew and declared that the new spirit will bring about revolutionary changes in the social system of India, but what form of it will finally emerge, he did not care to enunciate. Nor was it necessary. Enough that he endorsed the rising spirit and blessed it. Only he cautioned us that we must not deliberately destroy any institution. The social changes should be the indirect effect of the realisation and manifestation of the new spirit. In this also present-day nationalism finds support in Swamiji.

Did he also want the political emancipation of his country? Certainly he did. His ideal of freedom was absolute, as he often declared: it must be the freedom of the spirit, of the mind and also of the body. All these he wanted for his country. He devoutly wished that India should be great materially, intellectually, politically and above all spiritually. Surely Indian nationalism also, seeks as much.

He never cried halt in any line of progress, provided the motive was pure and the goal noble.

Another point in which Swamiji's view of Indian nationalism envisages the developments of the future, is the rise of the workers of the world, of the Sudra power. That the future of every nation, and of India of course, is in the hands of the Sudra, he unhesitatingly declared on many occasions; and there is at least one passage in his written books, which will become the very charter of the freedom of the Sudra and the sacred *mantram* of its consecration. (See *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Vol. VII, pp. 308-310.) Indian nationalism of the present day, it must be admitted, has not yet developed this aspect sufficiently. There is no doubt some talk now and then about the emancipation of the labour classes in India; but it is mostly in imitation of the English labour leaders or Russian communists. The genuine India-type has not yet emerged. Swamiji's nationalism, however, as we have said before, was fully conscious of this and gave an honourable place to it in its programme.

In advocating this all-round development of India, it is not that Swamiji was not conscious of the evils that would necessarily accompany it. His support of nationalism does not mean that he also advocated the means that are employed by our politicians in imitation of the West. The aspirations of modern India find place in Swamiji's vision, but their means do not. Here our national workers have to learn from him. He was fully conscious of the evils of Western nationalism and industrialism; and even though he felt that India cannot altogether escape them, he prescribed means by which India can pass through them unscathed and attain to her accustomed spiritual heights. He was not ignorant of the ways in which India in the past has sought to eliminate those evils through Varnashrama Dharma. He felt that a

new psychological sanction must be created for national service. That is why he glorified India and left an indelible impression on the mind of Indians of her greatness and evoked an undying passion for her service. But he also felt that if that sanction serves in taking individuals only up to the level of material achievements, it will ill serve India. He therefore prescribed a new motive of service and struggle,—the struggle for self-realisation. Every man and woman of India must be filled with a burning enthusiasm for spiritual self-realisation. And when they will, with such a motive, devote themselves to the service of India, they will not only achieve materially and intellectually, but also spiritually. Swami Vivekananda therefore solves the problem of the national workers, to which we have referred to at the outset of this essay, in two ways: (a) by glorifying India and making India's service a passion with everyone from the lowest to the highest, and (b) by prescribing self-realisation as the chief and all-comprehensive motive of all activity (of course to such a motive, when fully active, India cannot be what she is ordinarily conceived to be).

To truly understand these views of Swamiji, it is necessary that we truly grasp his idea of India. His conception of India contained different grades of views from the most concrete to the most abstract. He looked upon India as a geographical entity without clouding her with a halo of idealism; he looked upon her as a cultural entity; he looked upon her as a spiritual power and the giver of the highest illumination; and she was to him the object of deepest love and most intense adoration; she also appeared to him as the essence of humanity. In fact his view of India was indefinable; it contained all these various strata of perception; but it had no fixed form, either as a symbol of political or spiritual consciousness. This indefinability was the unique characteristic of Swami

Vivekananda's nationalism. It thereby became all-comprehensive and escaped the dangers of partiality, which all definiteness engenders. All these different phases found voice in him, and he also represented an attitude which transcended nationalism.

One peculiarity of the Swami requires to be noted in this connection. His spiritual consciousness and national consciousness were not apart but phases of the same fundamental consciousness. The fact is, to this prince of monks, the only reality was Brahman, and the highest impulse, its realisation. All other realities are experiences on the way,—different modes of consciousness all reflecting the primal glory of the Divine in more or less measures. His humanism, so remarkable in him, his love of art, science, history and human achievements were all characterised by the above consideration. All these manifested the central glory of the Eternal, therefore they had their legitimate places in his heart and appreciation. So also India. India was loved by him to the measure that she represented the radiance of God. Her politics, society, industry, culture, religion, her poverty and suffering, her struggles to rise and attain, all these were dear and sacred to him because of the highest illumination to which all these led. Without this basic spiritual consideration, his nationalism would be quite incomprehensible. Yet it should not be understood that in his homage to India, there was any *conscious* calculation of all these. His consciousness, always so approximate to the Divine consciousness, was like unto a flower of which the love of country, humanity and nature were so many petals.

It will be understood from this that to Swami Vivekananda nationalism was not the final word of human aspiration. Man must transcend it, not by thinking it to be foreign to himself, but by considering it to be an aspect of a higher consciousness. *So the impulse to*

*realise this higher consciousness must be the very basis of Indian nationalism.* Without this central motif, Indian nationalism is in the danger of being degraded to a sort of jingoism, crude and narrow. Swamiji never advocated this narrow nationalism. How is that higher consciousness to be attained? Here comes the call of the spiritual ideals of India. And here we understand the significance of Swamiji's injunction that the glory of the Atman should be preached all over the land from the highest to the lowest. Let self-realisation be the battle-cry of New India. The self is endowed with infinite power, illumination and joy,—let this be brought home to every man and woman, every boy and girl of India. Let them feel that life's only quest is this Self-realisation and let everyone start from wherever one is at present, towards the goal. Let the consciousness of this inherent power and greatness spur everyone on his way.

Naturally this consciousness will not in all or even most cases, appear as a struggle for *spiritual* self-realisation. That will be only in the cases of a minority, at least in the beginning. To most men, it will be a consciousness of the power of endurance, concrete, material achievement and fearlessness. To many others it will be the incentive to high intellectual and cultural achievements. But if the consciousness of the real nature of the self be there—and we should never cease to proclaim it to all and keep it ever before the nation,—this crude self-realisation will not be the last item of achievement; the original motive will by its very impetuosity impel and drive us on to higher and yet higher self-realisation, till we reach the very heart of the Eternal. *It all depends on the original impetus.* This alone will determine the direction of our progress and its destination. On this again depends how much we can be affected by the evils that infest the material aspects of nationalism. If the original

impetus be not powerful enough to take us beyond the planes of politics or industrialism, there is every danger of our being stuck in the morass of moral complications which are so luridly evident in Western nationalism. *So the proclaiming of the glory of the Atman is one of the ways of reconciling politics, etc., with the spiritual ideals of India.*

This also will save India from going to the extremes of materialism and there will thus be only a minimum of evil in the politics and industrialism of India. It will ensure an all-round development of the nation; for the self-conscious power of man will naturally seek variegated expression in all fields of life. Who can ever prescribe to the Self?

Self-realisation as the motive of nationalism has also another bright consequence. To it, the consciousness of India is naturally that of a land where the quest for Self-realisation and its success have had the most brilliant manifestation. India stands to this view as the mother of religions, the giver of spiritual gifts and the proclaimer of supernal peace. Here Indian nationalism becomes the highest internationalism. To a quest for Self-realisation, material and intellectual achievements are insignificant in comparison with the real and eternal achievement of Divine Illumination. So spirituality stands pre-eminent in our view and consciousness. And surely there cannot be any internationalism worth the name, which is not based on a consciousness of spiritual unity. Indian nationalism is thus another form of internationalism.

There is yet another phase of Self-realisation, which has an important bearing on Indian nationalism. Self-realisation after certain stages, becomes worshipful service of others. The strong alone can give. In fact one of the signs of true strength is that it gives itself away in the service of others. Self-sacrifice becomes then a

passion. Therefore those of us who are strong and illumined enough to aspire after the spiritual aspects of self-realisation, will be spontaneously filled with the spirit of service. And if we are to spare ourselves the suicidal war between the classes and the masses, if the Sudra power in India is to rise to its legitimate height without civil war, what can be a better and a more potent means than the sacrifice of the best and the purest of the nation to the service of the depressed masses of India? Therefore Swamiji sent out the call for the worship of the *Daivdra Nārāyana* as an integral part of his message for India's Self-realisation. This is how we are to spiritualise communism in India. This is how the highest of the nation are to become the servants of the masses in their passion for Self-realisation and self-sacrifice.

This is Swami Vivekananda's nationalism and this is how the service of the nation was to him the very realisation of the spiritual ideals of India. If nationalism, we have seen, does not antagonise with internationalism and leads automatically to spiritual self-realisation; and the power of the primal motive easily leads us untouched through all the evils of politics and industrialism on to the pure region of spirituality. It also eventually eliminates the dangers of the possible clash between the classes and the masses. It supports the present striving, leads to a brighter future and has ample scope within it for all future international developments. Viewed from his standpoint nationalism (with its political and industrial struggles) does not antagonise spiritual ideals. In the growing Self-realisation, not only do new layers of inner vision open one by one, and thus endow the individual with deeper understanding of things and enables him to take a higher view of them, but India also appears in subtler and subtler form and his nationalism is transfigured from its narrow conceptions to higher inter-

nationalism and eventually spiritual unity. The motive is the same, but the realisation is increasingly superfine. Will India take up this view? We are confident India has accepted Swami Vivekananda's message and is slowly assimilating it and will in no distant future work it out in its different functions. It may be fairly said the highest priest of Indian nationalism was Swami Vivekananda. No other Indian, to our knowledge, has shown a love for India greater than he did. A Western disciple states that his very accents, when he pronounced the word 'India,' seemed to melt with love and sent a thrill through the hearers. One who heard him for the first time speaking of India was so filled with the wonder and love for her, at the way he pronounced the blessed name of his motherland, that she secured the same evening a whole set of books on India to know more of that blessed country. This India ever occupied a most precious part of his thought. And this love and anguish for India he has bequeathed to his nation. And surely we can say that this love and reverence for her which is so evident among the young people of the present time has been derived in a large measure from the great Swami. This love of India will save us greatly from the evil consequences of our material struggle. We spoke of the psychological sanction that lies behind the sense of duty according to Varnashrama Dharma. The service of the motherland, however fraught with evil it may be, is the new duty of every Indian. Where shall we get the necessary psychological sanction for it? It lies surely in the love of the motherland bequeathed to us by Swami Vivekananda. This great love will consecrate. It will burn within us as a deathless passion. This passion is the sanction. To such a sanction, even evils are no longer evils, because it leads beyond evils. Let this passion grow more and more in our heart, and let its flame blend with the radiance of

the Divine. This is a great lesson which the Varnashrama Dharma has to teach us of the modern age, and let us, through it, face and tackle the rising problems.

We have already said how to Swami Vivekananda, nationalism was a flame of his luminous self-consciousness; and how, if we are to avoid the dangers of nationalism and reconcile its lower phases with spirituality, we must make self-realisation the fundamental motive of the individuals. We have also mentioned that to many this will be an incentive for acquiring material and intellectual greatness. This is necessary and quite good. But the helm of the national bark must not be in their hands. They alone are fit to lead to whom self-realisation is spiritual. They must *practise* spirituality wholeheartedly. A mere sentimental acquiescence in the ideal is of little value. Spirituality must be a solid reality to them. What is spirituality? It is the lasting consciousness of oneself as being spirit, beyond body and mind. We must feel every moment that we are spirit and not matter and mind and must of course assert that consciousness in our thought, word and deed. But such a consciousness to be attained requires earnest effort. Therefore Swami Vivekananda sent out a call for the best and the purest of the nation to take up the spiritual life in wholehearted earnestness. For he felt that only they could lead the nation to its pristine glory. India also therefore made it compulsory on all to make some practice or other daily to realise their spiritual self-hood. For unless we make a determined and earnest effort, we cannot hope to rise above the onslaughts of matter and mind and feel the worth of spirituality. What is the use of bragging about India's spiritual ideals, if we do not know what spirituality is? So practical spirituality there must be behind every Indian. And thus shall the nation advance realising all the phases of the self, material,

mental and spiritual, avoiding evils and consuming them where necessary, to-

wards that Summit where the light of Heaven kisses the crown of India.

## NOTES OF CONVERSATION WITH SWAMI TURIYANANDA

21ST JUNE.

*Swami T* : "Man is trying hard to make himself happy. But nothing succeeds unless He wills it. Freedom can be realised in two ways, by identifying oneself with Him and by living in eternal self-surrender to Him. There can be no freedom of will in separation from Him.

"Reliance on one's apparent self leads to ruin. To presume to be all-knowing is extremely harmful. Self-reliance or self-confidence means faith in the Self. To persist in remaining what one already is or in holding on to one's preconceived opinions at any cost,—such self-importance is bad."

22ND JUNE.

*Swami T* : "One must have the capacity to love. Oh, how madlike we used to love in our boyhood! I would love my brothers so much that the thought of renouncing them to become a *Sannyāsin*, used to make me cry. But afterwards the Master snapped these ties one by one. He asked S. : 'Whom do you love?' S. said : 'I do not love any one.' 'Oh you dry fellow!' the Master remarked.

"I have never felt sceptic about God."

24TH JUNE.

*Swami T* : "You can never be emancipated by adoring a man as man, —you must look upon him as God. However great he may be in spiritual wisdom and dispassion, however highly endowed he may be with spiritual powers, the worship of him will not effect your liberation, if you do not perceive him as God Himself. Without such a perception, his worship may serve to communicate to you his spiritual qualities and powers, but nothing

more. But if you worship a Divine Incarnation, knowing him as such or not, he will surely grant you God-realisation. Sisupāla attained God-realisation even by hating Sri Krishna. The Gopis realised God even though they considered Sri Krishna as only their lover. A Gopi was shut up in her room by her husband. Her intense anguish at being separated from Sri Krishna destroyed her sins; and the joy she felt by meditating on him destroyed her *punya*, religious merits; and she was liberated."

*Disciple* : "But we are told that when devotion grows intense, one forgets the Divine majesties of God."

*Swami T* : "That is after the devotee has realised God. He then carefully obliterates all consciousness of Divine powers in order to approach Him closer and closer. The Gopis were not ordinary human beings. Theirs were spiritual bodies . . . . continence is an essential means of Divine realisation. If one can maintain *Brahmacharya* for twenty-eight years, one will realise *Bhakti*, *Jñāna*, everything. Lust is called *manasija*, 'born in mind'. Only a hero can conquer the senses and go beyond them to the superconscious planes.

"I do not agree with you if you consider stubbornness as strength. Stubbornness is a cloak of weakness. The weak put it on in order to hide their weakness. Real strength knows how to bend and yet regain its true position."

26TH JUNE.

*Swami T* : "Swami P. has written : 'We are not living on the plane of surmise, but of actual perception.' . . . We must remember from time to time why we renounced the world and test

ourselves if we are really progressing towards the goal."

27TH JUNE.

Swami T : "His (Sri Ramakrishna's) initiation was no ordinary thing,—he would wake up spiritual consciousness at once. He would write some characters on the tongue and the disciple would feel something heaving up, wave after wave, within his chest. He asked me if I would like to have *Abhiseka* (Tantrik initiation). I said I did not know. "Then you need not have it," he replied. Once when I was returning from the Kali temple, after saluting the Mother, he said about me: 'His 'home'\* is that high Power from which proceed name and form.'

"I felt an intense longing for liberation. I wanted very much to completely realise God even in this life."

28TH JUNE.

Swami T : "We have seen with our own eyes and heard with our own ears. The tremendous enthusiasm of Swami Vivekananda for God-realisation used to dumbfound us and make us despair of ourselves, in spite of all encouragement and assurance from the Master. And we would think that this life would go in vain, without realising God. But at last favourable days came through the grace of the Master.

"You will be struck dumb with wonder if I tell you the story of Swami Vivekananda's begging and wandering days,—the life of extreme renunciation he then lived. Once in those days he wrote to me that he was passing his days 'like the crows, feeding himself—devoid of self-respect—at the house of others in the expectation of gain.'"<sup>†</sup>

29TH JUNE.

Swami T : " 'None else, He alone is my all in all'—when you will feel like

this and will not rely on anything, then will you be right. Now you are depending on earthly things, on wealth, man and learning. Even great scholars get mad by a single screw getting loose in the brain. We do not rely on God. We rely on our money, our relations, our friends. But 'O king, know that He is the treasure of those who have nothing.' When nothing will remain between you and Him, then you will realise Him. Sri Krishna had broken all the ties of the Gopis. But their sense of shame still remained. That tie also he broke at last. When the Lord sees that man is finding it hard to give up anything for Him, then He Himself takes it away. 'O Lord, take all things away from me, even those that I have kept hidden in my inmost heart.' 'If, O man, thou wilt cross the ocean of the world, thou must give up desires for earthly things.'

"The Master used to say: 'Do whatever you like after having tied the knowledge of Advaita in the corner of your cloth.' That is to say, know Him as the soul of your soul, the life of your life, the eye of your eye, and love Him. Nothing else than this, such as asking things of God, is true devotion. Supreme devotion cannot be had so long as there is the slightest desire in the mind."

My Master was read. Apropos of the passage, "Do you think that a man firmly persuaded that there is a Reality behind all these appearances, . . . . One who is infinite bliss, a bliss compared with which these pleasures of the senses are simply playthings, can rest contented without struggling to attain It?" Swami T. said:

"Just see! Our God is only a verbal affair. A little meditation, a little *japa*,—this is a poor sort of life. The heart

\* By 'home' Sri R. evidently meant that aspect of Divinity, which a disciple's inherent tendencies and potentialities indicated to be the ideal which he was consciously or unconsciously seeking to realise

† A quotation from the *Vairāgya-Satakam* of Bhartrihari. Extreme self-abnegation and self-abasement is a *sine qua non* of true *Vairāgya*, dispassion and renunciation. He who possesses nothing, to him alone the Lord comes.



must burst hungering for Him. An intense anguish must fill it and life should seem to go out without Him ;—only then it will be right.

"Nothing short of complete self-surrender to Him will do. You call Him the inner controller, omniscient and omnipresent, and yet you are afraid to surrender yourself to Him! 'Thinkest thou that thou wilt realise Mother by thy hypocritical devotion? No, No, this is not a sweet in a child's hand that thou wilt cajole it out of him.' You cannot deceive Him. He

sees all. . . . 'Thou art the doer, not I ; Thou art the mechanic, I am the machine.' . . . 'I am a jealous God.' If you love anything else than God and do not renounce all for Him, you cannot realise Him."

30TH JUNE.

Swami T : "Nobody wants Him. Men want to get rid of their misery, to enjoy life. To conceive a 'causeless' love for Him is very difficult. . . . I knew a man who used to cry for solitude. But one day he said : 'Shall I marry again?' "

## SANSKRIT CULTURE IN MODERN INDIA—I

By MAHAMAHOPADHYAYA HARAPRASAD SHASTRI, M.A., C.I.E., HON. D. LITT.

I am a Sanskritist by heredity, training and profession, and I feel an instinctive love for everything connected with Sanskrit, including Indology. I am now at the fag end of my life, and it has been my privilege to see Oriental studies decay in our country during the period of over seventy years that I have been studying Sanskrit. I have seen the old style of deep and intensive learning flourish and decay, and I have seen the new school of study come into being and take the field ; I have seen the old order giving place to the new. The old tradition is just passing away, and a new one is coming in. Great changes have altered the face of India—and also its heart—during one life-time. I think it is now time for us to take stock of the change, to cast a retrospective glance ; and we might even question ourselves, which way is our ancient classical learning to go, and how far the path that Oriental studies are taking now, has been suitable for the preservation of the old learning of the land ; and in what way a combination of the two can be effected. . . .

The eighteenth century of the Christian era was the palmy day of Sanskrit literature in India. Mahārāṣṭra Brahmins whose ancestral pro-

fession was the teaching of Sanskrit, were the dominant power in India throughout the century. They not only encouraged Sanskrit learning themselves, but their example was an inspiring light to others to encourage the study of Sanskrit. This was the age when great Indian jurists flourished. The earliest of them was Anantadeva, a Mahārāṣṭra Brahmin, who wrote in his own native district by the Godavari his learned works called the various Kaustubhas, under the patronage of Baz Bahadur Chandra, a Raja of distant Kumayun in the Himalayas. The next was Vaidyanātha Pāyagūṇḍe, and another Mahārāṣṭra Brahmin settled at Benares, whose erudite commentary is still the admiration of lawyers in India. The third was Jagannātha Tarkapañcānana of Bengal who was brought at the Government House in Calcutta by the first Governor-General, Warren Hastings, with military band playing, for the purpose of writing an exhaustive code of Hindu Law to be administered by the courts in British India. There were lesser lights all over India, eleven of whom in Bengal compiled the original Sanskrit work on Hindu Law of which Halhead's "Gentoo Law" was the

English translation. [The name of the work is Vivādārpava-Setu. It was published from Bombay years ago as the Code prepared under orders of Maharaja Ranjit Simha, the Lion of the Punjab.]

Not only was Law the only subject which flourished in Sanskrit, but other branches of knowledge also flourished in exuberance. Nāgoji Bhatta, the great Mahārāṣṭra Pandit, wrote his exhaustive commentary on the Mahābhāṣya in Grammar and other commentaries too, on almost all branches of Sanskrit literature. His learning was phenomenal, his character was exemplary and his presence inspiring. His was perhaps one of the last examples of the height to which human mind can be raised by a liberal education through Sanskrit only. Princes and potentates vied with one another in doing him honour.

Southern India produced great Pandits like Ahobala, who, fleeing from the converting zeal of Tipu Sultan, came as a fugitive to Benares almost in tattered rags, and was received with open arms by the Pandits of the holy city. His learning, too, was equally phenomenal and he allowed Benares to utilise it fully.

On the top of these came Rāma Śāstrī, the Nyāyadhīśa or Chief Justice of the Poona Durbar, famous for his learning, famous for his boldness and intrepidity and famous as an administrator of justice and a patron of education. For half a century, he was the earthly Providence of the Pandits of India, and no one with real learning came back disappointed from him.

But a change of spirit came with the advent of the nineteenth century. The English were the dominant race throughout the century, and they were anxious to bring their own language and literature, their own sciences and their culture for the benefit of India. But they were very cautious in the beginning. They wanted to impart education through the classics of India whether Sanskrit or Arabic and Persian.

But audacious ignorance at this period created an impression both in England and among the Court-going people of India that Sanskrit and Arabic could afford no culture. It was thought that Sanskrit specially had no literature worth naming except disputations in Grammar and Logic. It had no science, no poetry, no art and no culture. This, in fact, was the opinion of Thomas Babington Macaulay.

Relying on this opinion, Macaulay wrote his terrible minute against education through the medium of Indian Classics, and threw the entire weight of his name, of his learning and of his position for imparting education through the medium of English; and the English Government acted up to his advice. There came a revolutionary change in the educational system of India. Old style Sanskrit Colleges—Ṭols as we call them in Bengal—and Paṭhaśālās came to be deserted, and English schools on the other hand began to be filled. A little knowledge of English gave comfortable livelihood to clerks and lower grade officers not only in the administration of British India, but also in the offices of merchants and industrials, who for the first time began to start firms in India. I have seen with my own eyes in the sixties and seventies of the last century, how the Sanskrit Ṭols became empty and English schools flourished. There is a bit of personal history here. . . . My father died in 1861 and the charge of distributing honoraria to learned Pandits assembled on religious, festive and social occasions in our neighbourhood devolved upon me, though I was then very young. I remember, in 1864, there was a tolerably big assembly in my neighbourhood; and I distributed honoraria, on behalf of the master of the house, to one hundred Pandits, all engaged in teaching Sanskrit in their own residences from Navadvīpa to Calcutta, on both sides of the Ganges. Fourteen years later, in 1878, on the occasion of the Śrādh ceremony of the

rather of our great novelist, the famous Bankim Chandra Chatterji, I was requested to ascertain how many Pandits were engaged in teaching in their residences within this area, and I found only twenty-six! A fall of 74% in fourteen years!

After the quelling of the Mutiny, the feeling of despair took possession of the Indian mind that the old Indian literature, old Indian culture, old Indian sciences and arts, whether Hindu or Mohammedan would perish; and that, at no distant future. The situation was really desperate. Manuscripts were perishing in heaps in the houses of Pandits who were the leading educationists of past generations, or were being carried to all parts of Europe as the last remnants of *Indian culture*.

I will give some account of how Manuscripts migrated and were destroyed. In the wars of the English in the nineteenth century, Mss. were an object of loot. In the year 1886, within a month after the proclamation was issued for the annexation of Upper Burmah, Prof. Minayeff who was residing at Milan in Italy, received a telegram from St. Petersburg to proceed to Mandalay at once. The Professor went there and found that the common soldiers were using the pages of the Mss. in the splendid Royal Library of Burmah as cigarette-papers. He complained to General Pendergast who at once put a stop to that abuse, and allowed Prof. Minayeff to take as many of the Mss. as he liked. The Professor came to Calcutta and brought to me an introduction from my revered Professor, Mr. C. H. Tawney. I believe he took this precaution simply to save me from the attentions of the Police for having anything to do with Russians. He was in Calcutta for several days, but he spent several hours with me. One day I went to his place and he showed me seven big packing cases containing the Mss.-spoils from Mandalay. I could not see the Mss. because the boxes were then all nailed,

but the Professor gave me a glowing description of their contents. Some of the Mss. looted in the First Burmese War in 1826 are to be found in the Bishop's College library.

The Bhagavad-Gītā which Peshwā Bājī Rāo II used to read is to be found in the India Office Library.

The Arabic Mss. looted from Tipu Sultan's library at Serangapatam are to be found in the Asiatic Society's rooms.

But there is one satisfaction, and that a great one, in the fact that the Mss.-loot have been carefully preserved, much better preserved than probably it would have been their lot in India, at least for some time.

The way Mss. have been dissipated and destroyed in the house of Pandits is simply a dismal story. A Pandit who in the early years of nineteenth century was a great educationist and considered his Mss. to be his best treasures and housed them in the best room of his house, carefully dried them in the sun after every rainy season and kept them tightly packed in thick cloth, died. His son who had learned A, B, C, read Murray's Spelling-book and the Azimgarh English Reader, had secured a small berth in the local Collectorate where his pay and perquisites, fair and unfair, amounted to at least ten times what his father could have ever earned. He saw no good in the Mss. and removed them from the best room in the house, first, to the store-room and then, to the kitchen where a thick coat of soot enveloped the whole collection. The house-wife who was greatly troubled for dry fuel for preparing her husband's early meal, discovered that the Mss. were kept between two wooden boards. These she exploited for the purpose of fuel but could not use the paper or palm-leaves for the same purpose, because there is a superstition that the paper or palm-leaf on which there is any writing is the very self of Sarasvatī and should not be consigned to fire. These papers got mixed up when the boards and the strings

fastening them were removed, and became a heap which in the course of a year or so were thrown in the kitchen-garden, there to rot.

Some old Pandit, apprehensive of the fate of his old valuable Mss. in the hands of children who he could see would not care for Sanskrit, threw them in the Ganges, thus giving the river goddess the most valuable offering he could make. At Navadvipa I have seen heaps of old Mss. rotting on the road-side. They are often used as waste-paper to cover holes in thatched roofs or in the mud-wall, and often are sold to buyers of waste-papers, at so much to the maund.

I will give one instance which happened at Udaipur. An old woman used to bring Mss. to a Bania and take whatever price he offered. But one day she brought a goodly Ms. and demanded four annas because she was in sore need; but the Bania would not give her more than two annas, so they were higgling over the price when a Charan or Rajput bard came and asked the old woman what the matter was. On examining the Ms. he thought it must be something very important, and he asked her to accompany him as he would be able to give her a better price. He took the woman to the Maharaj-Kumar, and the enlightened Prince got the Ms. examined then and there by his Court Pandits. They all declared it to be Śāli-Hotra, a treatise on the horse and its diseases. Now the Śāli-Hotra was so long lost in Sanskrit—it was known only from a Persian translation, and some people are said to have retranslated it from the Persian. The Maharaj-Kumar was delighted at this discovery and gave the old woman Rs. 50. Mahāmahopādhyāya Morardan, while at Udaipur, heard the story and got a copy made for himself. I got a copy from Morardan's son, and it is now deposited in the Asiatic Society's rooms.

The history of the Ms. collection in the Durbar Library, Nepal, is very very

interesting. In the eighteenth century there were three big and many small principalities in the Nepal Valley, the utmost extent of which is fifteen by fifteen miles. All the princes for generations were collectors of Mss., charts, maps and pictures on religious subjects. But at the Gorkhali conquest of 1768 their collections were all looted, so much so that the existence of a State Library was unknown. In 1868 the Resident, Mr. Lawrence, published the list of Mss. which were considered at his time to be rare by the Pandits of Nepal. Maharaja Sir Bir Shamsheer Jang Bahadur Rana made a resolution to have a State Library. He collected together all Mss. in the Palaces of Nepal and housed them in the College building where I saw them in 1897. It was a most interesting collection containing palm-leaf Mss. more than one thousand years old. Sir Bir Sham Sher assured me that he would collect all the important Mss. in the Nepal Valley and put them in a Durbar library and that he was constructing a library building with a clock tower in a most prominent place in the city. In 1907 I found the building complete and the library housed there. There were 16,000 Sanskrit Mss. on palm-leaf and paper, the whole of Buddhist literature in Tibetan and the whole of Buddhist literature in Chinese. It was a splendid place for research students. The idea was mooted by Sir Bir and executed by his brother Maharaja Sir Chandra Shamsheer Jang Bahadur Rana. Sir Bir made immense efforts to collect Mss. A Bengali Pandit family, resident at Nepal, had two villages in the Nepal dominions. These villages were sequestered at the time of financial stringency owing to the English war of 1814. For three generations the Brahmins struggled hard to get back their possessions. But Sir Bir restored the villages to them and they surrendered their Mss. to him. A Brahmin involved in a rather serious criminal case obtained his pardon by

presenting to the library some of the finest Mss. to be found there.

Of the 16,000 Sanskrit Mss. the palm-leaf Mss. are generally copied in pre-Muhammadan times. The oldest of the dated Mss. in the library was copied in 908. But there are dozens which palæographically belong to an earlier age. I believe, I have given descriptions of all palm-leaf Mss. I found there.

The desperate situation, however, was saved to a certain extent by the exertions of a distinguished Pandit of Lahore; and Sanskrit literature owes a debt to this city which it will never be able to discharge. Rādhākīṣan, the son of Pandit Madhusūdan, the high priest of the Lion of the Punjab, wrote a letter to Lord Lawrence, the Governor-General of India, in 1868, for the collection and conservation of Sanskrit manuscripts which under the circumstances existing at the time were sure to perish within a short time. As the Governor-General Sir John Lawrence was agent of the British Government at the court of Lahore, and he and Rādhākīṣan who had great influence there, were both friends. Lord Lawrence, at the suggestion of Pandit Rādhākīṣan, took up the work of the search of Sanskrit manuscripts and made permanent provision for the distribution of Rs. 24,000 annually to the different Provincial Governments to start operations in this search. The search languished in many provinces and dropped off in others. Bombay and Bengal were the only two provinces where the money was entrusted to the local Asiatic Societies which are still continuing the search with good results. In 1898, in Madras, a proposal was actually made to utilise part of the grant for Archaeological purposes. But they have since done good work in Madras and the peripatetic party has brought to light an immense quantity of Sanskrit works, peculiar to South India.

Sixty years have passed, and it is

time to take stock of what has been done and what remains to be done in this direction. Already in the early years of the nineteenth century, in spite of what audacious ignorance might have said to the contrary, Horace Hayman Wilson declared, and the historian Elphinstone echoed the same idea, that Sanskrit had more works than Latin and Greek put together. After the institution of the search, the German scholar Hofrath Bühler made his celebrated tour through Rajputana and Kashmir and brought to light new branches of literature, new schools of philosophy, new schools of rhetoric and produced a report which will be read with admiration by all who are interested in Sanskrit. Following in his wake, Sir R. G. Bhandarkar and Prof. Peterson of Bombay brought to light many important works in all the branches of Sanskrit. The vast field of Jaina literature, both in Sanskrit and Prakrit, was brought to public notice by the exertion and scholarship of these two eminent Orientalists. The peripatetic party in Madras has recently brought to light the works of the Prābhākara School of Mumāṃsā, of which only a small work of 150 pages was all that was known up to that time. We in Bengal have also done our mite. By including Nepal within the field of our operations, and working on the wake of Brian Hodgson, we have given publicity to the Buddhist literature in Sanskrit and the Śaiva and Tāntric literature of the last five hundred years of the first millennium of the Christian era.

All the Mss. that were carried away from India to Europe, have been catalogued; and this stimulated the spirit of cataloguing in India and the European catalogues of Sanskrit Mss. are an object lesson to all of us in India, who are interested in Sanskrit. It would be interesting to know that the French, with whom intellectual culture is instinctive, instituted a search for Sanskrit Mss. in the early part of the

eighteenth century when Dupleix was the Governor of Chandernagore, and he sent about 400 Mss. to Paris, where they will be found in the Bibliothèque Nationale. Some of the Smṛiti works of this collection were written by one of the eleven Pandits who helped Hal-head in the production of his "Gentoo Law" in 1772.

All that has been done during the last sixty years is only a preliminary survey. Mss. were very shy of coming out. The Pandits were to a very great extent professional men who earn their livelihood by the study of these manuscripts; and as no one can be blamed for not revealing the sources of his income, the Pandits cannot be blamed for concealing their manuscripts and for not even giving information about them to strangers. During the preliminary period, however, we have trained the Pandits to show their Mss. and even to part with them. The spirit is also changing with the time. Pandits and their scions now want to make their ancestral inheritance the common property of man as it is no longer a bread-earning business. I will give some examples. I went to Dacca in search of Mss. in the year 1891 with one of my veteran assistants trained by Raja Rajendralal Mitra, and was further assisted by a number of patriotic Pandits of the Eastern Capital of Bengal. The result in the direction of cataloguing or acquiring was not at all encouraging at the time. But after more than thirty years, the same area which we had surveyed, has given the Dacca University nearly 5000 manuscripts. The search in Mithila by Raja Rajendralal and myself was not very encouraging either, but it has enabled the Bihar and Orissa Research Society, within the last ten years, to produce a big volume of catalogue for the Smṛiti literature alone. The recent search in the District of Puri is likely to be still more successful; for I am sure there are more than two lacs of

Mss. in the 32 Śāsana villages inhabited by Brahmins alone.

The work of the last sixty years was carried on by scholars who had other avocations of life, at their leisure hours, assisted by ill-paid Pandits and often interfered with by unscholarly administrators of funds.

On the death or retirement of one scholar devoted to the search, it was very difficult to find a successor, for the work was honorary. There were other draw-backs, too. Still, in sixty years it has produced marvellous results. The Mss. are not so shy of coming to public notice as they had been before. Besides, Indian Princes have helped and are helping the work of search in British India. Many of them have instituted search, within their own dominions, with excellent results. The ultimate end of the search is to find good works and to publish them. The Sanskrit series instituted for publication by the enlightened Governments of Mysore, Travancore, Baroda and Kashmir are doing excellent service. They are everyday bringing out marvellously 'New' works of ancient fame. The Mysore Government should be proud of the achievements of Shama Sastri in finding, editing and translating Kauṭilya's Artha-Śāstra in the Mysore series. The Travancore Government should be equally proud of the late T. Gaṇapati Śāstri's achievements in finding, in editing and in commenting upon the works of Bhāṣa, besides a whole host of other works. The Kashmir Darbar should be proud of Pandit Madhusūdana Koul's achievements in finding, editing and commenting upon numerous works on Kashmir Śaivism. The Gaekwad's Government should be proud of the achievements of Dr. Benoytosh Bhattacharyya for publishing and commenting upon the Tattva-Saṃgraha of Śāntarakṣita and its commentary by Kamala-śīla, the Śādhana-mālā and other works of Later Buddhism.

The works, which these series pub-

lished are worthy of the Governments patronising them and of the scholars engaged in editing them. They are all of such a nature that private publishers could not venture to undertake them. So it is the patriotism of the Princes that much come forward to bring our ancient literature to public notice. They are the richest inheritance we have received from our ancestors, and they should not be allowed to lie idle in boxes of monastic Bhāṇḍārs, on bamboo scaffoldings in private houses, and on the shelves in the public libraries, with the imminent risk of being destroyed and lost to the world for ever any day.

The preliminary period being over, the Princes and people of India should take intense interest in finding Mss. and, when worthy, publishing them. Every collection of manuscripts wherever found, can be expected to contain something strikingly new. Sanskrit ceased to be the medium of liberal education since the political destiny of the country passed into the hands of others. It remained as professional study of Brahmins for the purpose of earning a livelihood, as priests and religious advisers as well as for preserving the Hindu society intact, a duty which they took upon themselves in the absence of Hindu political powers. So, in every collection you would find, as a rule, current works and standard works—works mostly of recent date. But every Pandit family had some hidden source of professional income and influence, unknown to others, in the shape of some unique manuscript. This they would not part with or show to others. But, now, after a hundred and fifty years of British Government, when their profession is well-nigh gone, there would be no objection to these unique manuscripts being used by others for historical and archaeological purposes.

The calculation of Horace Hayman Wilson and others that Sanskrit contains more works than Greek and Latin put together, has been left far behind

by the preliminary work of these sixty years. The number of works in Sanskrit now is nearly double of what was known a hundred years ago. Add to these the immense number of Buddhist works known through translations in the languages of Buddhist countries. In Tibetan there are Bstan-Hgyur and Bkash Hgyur collections which are said to contain the translation of about 8000 Buddhist Sanskrit works of which only 200 are known in the original Sanskrit. How many Sanskrit works were translated into Chinese, we do not know. Nanjio's catalogue of the Chinese Tripiṭaka alone contains about 1300 names of Sanskrit works; a few only of which are extant so far in the original. A full stock-taking of Chinese literature translated from the Sanskrit, we shall be enabled to make when Dr. Probodh Chandra Bagchi of the University of Calcutta completes the publication of his monumental work on Buddhist literature in China, of which the first volume, bringing the history up to the 'Tang' period (beginning of the seventh century), has so far appeared. The original Sanskrit works of these translations are to be sought and discovered before they are irrecoverably lost. They will certainly add much to the huge mass imperfectly guessed by Wilson.

In every Sanskrit work of any authority, either in Smṛiti, or in Alaukikāra, or in Grammar, or in Philosophy, or in Artha-Śāstra, or even, in Kāma-Śāstra, we get quotations by hundreds from preceding works; those ancient authorities are not always forthcoming. A search is to be instituted for them without any loss of time. Sometimes the book quoted is available, but the quotation is not there. That may mean that the work quoted had many recensions. These would be a deserving object of search.

The work of search is nowhere needed so badly as in the case of the Purāṇas, the Tantras, the Rāmāyaṇa and the Mahābhārata. I have shown

elsewhere, how these works have been revised often and often during the long centuries after the time of their original composition. Some of the Purāṇas have apparently undergone three, four or five revisions. Some have been so revised as to go almost out of recognition. Others have been so revised as to go out of existence. In many of the Purāṇas we find two or three recensions, differing from one another in toto ; e.g., the Skanda-Purāṇa : one recension of it is divided into seven Khaṇḍas, all dealing with religion, rituals and the holy places of Northern and Western India, and another is divided into six Saṁhitās and fifty-one Khaṇḍas dealing with all sorts of Paurāṇic subjects ; a third, more ancient than the other two, is a work by itself without any division,—now lying in Ms. in the Darbar Library, Nepal, written in the Gupta character of the sixth or seventh century A.D.

Some of the Purāṇas like the Brahma-Vaivarta, have an 'ādi' recension which has nothing to do with the current ones.

The Mahābhārata which was an epic poem in the original was so revised as to form a history of the Kaurava race, and as the idea of history expanded from that of mere chronicle and annals to that of a history of society in all its aspects, it was revised again and again and many episodes were thrown into it, till it assumed the magnitude of a lakh of verses or more.

The Rāmāyaṇa, too, though in the form of an epic poem was converted into the history of the Solar race with one hundred episodes thrown into it.

It is a curious fact that in the matter of the Rāmāyaṇa, the Mahābhārata and the Purāṇas, no two manuscripts agree ; and I believe, every district has its peculiar recension. As regards the Rāmāyaṇa, the Bombay recension differs materially from the Bengal recension, and the different recensions of Bengal differ from one another. If this be so with a comparatively short work,

from the Sanskrit point of view, as the Rāmāyaṇa with 24000 verses is, one can imagine how the number of recensions of the Mahābhārata which is four times as large, must have increased and multiplied.

To account for these differences one should remember that the Rāmāyaṇa and the Mahābhārata were composed at a time when writing was unknown ; and they were memorised by bards who sang them before an appreciative audience. The Rhapsodists often used their own talents in adding and subtracting interesting episodes according to the tastes and propensities of the hearers. Their successors took the cue from them and improved upon it. So, there would be many schools, and schools within schools. It might be expected that when writing was introduced, these differences would cease, but they did not. So there are an infinite number of recensions.

The number of the Purāṇas is nearly a hundred. Their average extent is 20,000 ślokas. Of these 18 are called Mahā-purāṇas, 18 are called Upa-purāṇas, 18 more are unsuccessful candidates for a place in the Mahā and Upa-purāṇa lists ; the rest are miscellaneous works. But, as I have already told you, the same Purāṇa has two or three distinct forms. Sometimes, a Purāṇa of the same name is in both the lists ; but they are distinct works.

The characteristics of a Purāṇa are differently estimated ; some say, they have five characteristics : they must describe, e.g. (1) Creation, (2) Details of creation, (3) Genealogies, (4) Manusages and (5) Biographies of distinguished kings. Others, e.g., the Bhāgavata-purāṇa, say that they have ten characteristics. But the definition given by the Matsya-purāṇa is the most comprehensive. It practically says, "Anything old is Purāṇa."

In the matter of the Purāṇas every manuscript has a peculiar feature, and so, all manuscripts are important from



the point of view of a collector and a scholar.

The Tantra is a vast literature but very little is known of it and very little indeed has been studied. I obtained two very old manuscripts: one Kubjikāmatam or Kulālikāmnāya written in the eighth or ninth century, and the other Niḥśvāsa-Tattva-Saṁhitā, in the ninth or tenth century characters. The first work, now in the library of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, gives us the information that the Tantras came from beyond India, and spread all over India at a time when the Vedic and the Paurāṇic cults were rather weak. The other manuscripts now in the Darbar Library, Nepal, treats of two different principles;—the Mūla and the Guhya, i.e., the original and the mystic, or in other words, the Vedic and the Tāntric ideas and practices.

There are two characteristics of the Tantras: (1) That they evolve the images of gods and goddesses from the letters of the alphabet (Bijākṣaras) and (2) that they prescribe the worship of deities in union with their consorts (Sāśakti, or Yuganaddha). The latter when put forth in codices produces the Yāmalas or couples and there are so many of them, like the Viṣṇu-Yāmala, Rudra-Yāmala, Śakti-Yāmala, etc. The Tantra literature was very fruitful in the seventh, eighth and ninth centuries. In these centuries the literature produced a vast number of works. The Vaiṣṇava-tantra works were named Pāñca-rātras, and their number is nearly 200. Only a few have been discovered and one has been published by the German scholar Schröder from Adyar, the Ahirbudhnya-Saṁhitā. The rest are to be sought for and studied. The Kashmir Śaiva School of Philosophy, founded in the last half of the ninth century, was based on a large number of Śaiva Tantras written in previous centuries. Only a few of these original Tantras have as yet been recovered, and I believe, only two or three have been published in the Kashmir Sanskrit

series. Here also is a wide scope for research which may lead to very very important results. The Matta-mayūra sect which flourished in the ninth century near Gwalior, was a great builder of Śaiva temples, and their works, regarded as original Tantras, are vast in extent. Some of these works were found in the Darbar Library of Nepal, and one at Trivandrum in the extreme South of India. This has been edited by that indefatigable scholar the late T. Ganapati Śāstrī. The work is by Iśāna Siva. The rest are to be searched, studied and published.

There are so many schools of original Tantras that it would be tedious to enumerate them. The period of original Tantras was over, I believe, in the tenth century A.D. Then came the period of compilations and commentaries. Some of them are admirable works. Of the commentaries the most comprehensive is that of Rāghava Bhaṭṭa of Central India, fifteenth century, (entitled Padārthādarśa) on the Śāradā-Tilaka by Lakṣmaṇa Gupta, one of the very famous Śaiva philosophers of Kashmir (tenth century). Of the compilations the best is by the revered Tāntric scholar of Bengal, Kṛṣṇānanda Āgama Vāgīśā (sixteenth and seventeenth centuries), entitled Tantra-sāra. How the Buddhist Tāntric ideas were absorbed into Brahmanism is exemplified in the works—numerous and voluminous as they are—of Tripurānanda, Brahmānanda, and Pūrṇānanda, three successive gurus who flourished in Eastern Bengal during the whole of the sixteenth century A.D. These compilations are as common as black berries, to quote the rather irreverent proverb, and they afford ample scope for research, study and publication.

European scholars have done a great deal for the study of the Vedas. The Vedas being the oldest literature in India, the attention of the Orientalists was very much attracted to them. The Saṁhitās of one or two Śākhās of each Veda have been published, But the

Śākhās themselves are very extensive. Patañjali, the writer of the Mahābhāṣya on Pāṇini speaks of 21 Śākhās of the Ṛg-veda, 101 of the Yajur-veda, 1000 of the Sāma-veda and 6 of the Atharva-veda. Our Pandits are under the impression that the Yajur-veda is of two divisions ;—the Black and the White. The White contained 16 Śākhās and the Black, 85. But recent research has shown that the Black Yajus has only 5 Śākhās current in Southern India ; the other 80 are neither White nor Black. Of these 80 only two have been found out and published ;—viz., the Maitrāyaṇīya and the Kāṭhaka. Where are the rest ? The Śākhās appear at present to be geographical. If these Śākhās are discovered, it is likely to add to our information, both historical and geographical, about ancient India. The Black and the White divisions of the Yajur-veda have been so deeply rooted in the Indian mind that in the early eleventh century, while founding a University for Sanskrit culture in his dominions, Rājendra Cola, as we know from his inscriptions, made provisions for two Professors only,—one for the White and the other for the Black Yajur-veda, and attached 25 students to each chair. Regardless of the 1000 recensions of the Sāma-veda, he made provisions for two chairs only in the Sāmaveda, viz., Jaiminīya Śākhā and the Kauthuma Śākhā ; and the popular belief is that the Sāma-veda has two divisions, (1) Kauthuma and (2) Rāṇāyaṇīya. An old Vedic scholar of the old school, who kept the sacrificial fire burning all through his life, told me that in Northern India, the Vedas have been made easy by Yājñavalkya and his followers. The White recensions attributed to Yājñavalkya and his followers are much easier than the Black ones current in Southern India, the Kauthuma of Northern India is much easier than the Rāṇāyaṇīya of Southern India, and the Śākala of the Ṛg-Veda is much easier than the Vāskala and others current in Southern India.

From a study of the Purāṇas it appears to me that Kṛṣṇa-dvaipāyana analysed the heaps of mantras into three parts, (1) Ṛk, (2) Sāman and (3) Yajus, and he assigned each to one of his pupils. The differentiation into Śākhās began with their pupils and pupil's pupils for some generations. Each Śākhā has its Brāhmaṇa and its six Āṅgas. Āraṇyakas and Upaniṣads were regarded as parts of the Brāhmaṇas. The Brāhmaṇas, Āraṇyakas and Upaniṣads are not books in the modern sense of the word by one author, but a compilation of dicta of the ṛṣis in sacrificial assemblages. The compilation of these dicta under certain principles, either by a great ṛṣi or by a committee of ṛṣis, is a Brāhmaṇa. The Brāhmaṇas of so many Śākhās of the Vedas may not be extant up to the present day after so many revolutions. But it is believed that many more Śākhās may be discovered over and above those already known. These afford much scope for research, study and publication.

A search for the Āṅgas of the different Śākhās may also be very fruitful. We have already a very large number of Śikṣas published, and many yet may be found. Pāṇini's influence has killed almost all the Śākhā Grammars ; but still some may yet be found, for he mentions at least ten of his predecessors in his Sūtras. We ought to be certain which of these is a Śākhā grammar and which is a comprehensive one. The only Nirukta is that of Yāska, but he mentions several of his predecessors. Are the works all lost ? Only one small work on Vedic astronomy is extant. The Śākhā astronomies have been all killed by the later Saṃhitās and Siddhāntas. Even a scrap of a Śākhā astronomy would be of immense value to us. Every Śākhā had its own Chandas, but Piṅgala has killed them all, and Piṅgala has a large following. Any scrap of information about a Śākhā Chandas in any Purāṇa, Tantra or commentary would be a valuable discovery.

Many of the Śākhā Kalpas are still

extant. Many have been irretrievably lost but many may yet be recovered. These Kalpas are divided into three parts, viz., (1) Śrauta (2) Gṛhya and (3) Dharma.

Each Śrauta work produced many schools, represented by different commentaries. From commentaries came treatises on sacrifices; from these treatises on sacrifices came Prayogas or rules, and Paddhatis or rituals of the sacrifices. This branch of literature is still living, though not vigorously. From great sacrifices they have come down to merely lighting the sacred fire, and pouring a little clarified butter into it. There are but few Vedic rites prevalent at the present day, but even these few have many Prayogas and many Paddhatis.

The other two branches of the Śākhā Kalpa, viz., Gṛhya and Dharma, bloomed forth, during the Brāhminya domination in India from 200 B. C. to 200 A.D., into metrical Smṛtis. They are not like the Śrauta-Sūtras, only concerned with sacrifices and high religious life; but they concern life in general. They regulate domestic and social life in all its aspects and, therefore, they have even now a vigorous existence. The metrical Smṛti treatises began to develop their commentaries; and with the new development of life and ideas in India, the commentaries expanded their bulk and became more and more comprehensive. The Śāstra broke into sections like Ācāra, Vyāvahāra, Prāyaścitta and so forth. But since the eleventh century, when the Mahomedans set their foot in India, kings and Brahmins became alarmed for the

very existence of the Varṇāśrama community and began to write many local compilations, called Nibandhas. Fifty of such compilations are extant in full and are still guiding the lives of millions of Hindus; and, 200 more are known in scraps only. The recovery of these Nibandhas in full would be a great service to Hindu society, as well as to Sanskrit scholarship.

The Brahmins are much maligned for their selfishness, bigotry, short-sightedness and what not. But there is no doubt that they saved the Hindu ideals in India on two great occasions: Once in the third century B. C.; when Aśoka wanted to level down distinctions of caste and creed and take away all privileges which the Brahmins enjoyed in matter of punishments and law-suits they had no other alternative but to put their house in order and really deserve the respect of the people by writing the metrical Smṛtis, by making the Rāmāyaṇa, the Mahabhārata and the Purāṇas available to the people who were being lured away by Buddhism with its gorgeous ritualism and its democracy. Once again in the eleventh century they saved Hindu society, by writing these Nibandhas, from the onslaughts of Mahomedan preachers. They were equally clever in absorbing all conquering races into the bosom of the Hindu society in some of the most crucial turns of its history. Where are the Huns? Where are the Jaffas? Where are the Śakas? Where are the Yuch-chis? They form an integral part of the Hindu society. May they yet do the same and absorb Western and Mid-eastern culture into their own!

## NEW LIGHT ON DREAM-PSYCHOLOGY

[From Upanishadic Sources]

By R. NAGA RAJA SARMA, M.A., L.T.

In the course of my paper submitted to the Psychology section of the Fourteenth Session of the Indian Science Congress, held at Lahore, I had endeavoured to criticise the Freudian hypothesis relating to the interpretation of dreams from the standpoint of Upanishadic psychology. I followed up the investigation, and in my second paper on the subject, contributed to the Psychology section of the Science Congress held at Calcutta early last year, I examined the theory of dreams advanced by the late lamented Dr. Rivers, F.R.S., and discussed the significance of several Upanishadic passages dealing with the problem of dreams and their interpretation. In the present paper I shall submit to a critical examination some of the recent theories of dreams, and indicate that the Upanishadic hypothesis is by far saner, safer, and systematic than most of the theories that have been put forward from time to time ever since the problem of dreams and their interpretation was handled in the West with a thorough grasp and a firm grip by Freud and others.

### I

It is impossible to overlook a preliminary difficulty that is bound to confront an investigator of the problem of dreams in the light of Upanishadic psychology. In the West, investigation of dream-phenomena has been undertaken by medical men who are also fully and perfectly conversant with the theory of psychology, its method, problems and general outlook. Psycho-analysis has come to stay in the West. How far the psycho-analyst has practically succeeded in effecting cures of mental abnormalities it is not possible

to dogmatise on, but the difficulty is that an investigation of a pre-eminently psychological problem by medical men and women often fails to render adequate justice to the psychological facts and implications. The value of psycho-therapy is great and undoubted. Psychiatry has definitely and indissolubly allied itself with psychology. Notwithstanding the gradual and even inevitable shading off into one another of the problems of the medical persons and psychologists at a certain stage, I mean a borderland-stage, of investigation, I think it is absolutely indispensable in the interests of psychology proper and those of a methodological quest after pronouncedly psychological data and their interpretation, to investigate how much of a given mental abnormality can properly be attributed to purely psychical phenomena and how much to others,—non-psychical ones, understanding the term in its widest meaning. A medical man studying dream-phenomena maintains that a particular dream is sure to produce a tonic effect or a depressing reaction on an individual. But the fundamental problem for the psychologist is to ascertain all about the psychological structure and function of a given dream without allowing himself to be side-tracked into any medical discussions, diagnoses, etc. Western theories of dreams suffer from this disability in a pointed manner. In formulating a theory of dreams, Western psychologists ogle at medicoes while the latter reciprocate. The disinterested interest in psychological inquiry, untrammelled by extra-psychological considerations, suffers thereby. I am aware some psychologists of late have questioned if at all such a disinterested outlook would

advance psychological research. In any theory of dream-psychology, I think it obligatory on the part of the investigator to keep apart psychological and other-psychological like the medical considerations. Freud, Adler, Jung and others in the West were expert medical men, and in the study of dreams and interpretation of abnormal conduct, Adler in particular advocated and defended the theory of organ-inferiority. I cite all this in support of the preliminary difficulty pointed out by me in keeping data, medical and psychological, separate and in not confusing the medical with the psychological interpretation.

Even though distinguished Orientalists have in the past directed their attention to a study of Sanskrit Literature, dealing with prose, poetry, drama and philosophy in general, and devoted their energies to chronological research in particular, no one has so far made a special study of the dream-problem and its solution attempted by the Upanishadic seers either in India or in the West. I sent an account of my investigations of the Upanishadic texts to Mr. John T. MacCurdy, M. B. (Hopkins), M.A. (Cantab), Lecturer in Psycho-pathology in the Cambridge University. The following is the full text of the letter he was kind enough to write to me. "Many thanks for your letter of the 10th January and the enclosed report of your dream paper. The latter interests me greatly. I quite agree with you that the simple wish-fulfilment hypothesis or that of mere conflict is inadequate and that a more inclusive theory is needed. The Upanishadic view is satisfactory in its breadth but it seems to me to be of doubtful psychological utility because it is so negative. It claims merely lack of waking control in the production of dreams. It is true that you say the unbridled creative unconscious is at work, but the combinations of the *Vasanas* seem to be purely haphazard according to your view. So far as your

formulations go there is nothing to account for the sense that many dreams do show or for the sense that others may reveal on analysis. It seems to me that although we may admit a relaxation of waking control—and are forced to do so—we cannot begin to understand dreams until we know something about the laws which govern the combination of images in the unconscious. That is the crux of the problem. Yours truly, (Sd.) J. T. MacCurdy."

With the point of view of investigation suggested in the foregoing letter, I examined some typical and representative Upanishadic texts and the results are embodied in the succeeding paragraphs. Before I discuss the texts let me offer a few critical remarks on Mr. MacCurdy's own theory of dreams, a theory which affords a striking illustration of the difficulty, to which I made a reference, of keeping separate clinical and psychological data—a difficulty, failure to overcome which has adversely affected MacCurdy's own theory of dreams.

Suppose the crux of the problem of dreams lies in the combination of the images of the unconscious. What are the laws according to which they combine? Prof. MacCurdy has not himself formulated any laws that would appear to him to determine, regulate and govern the combination of dream-imagery. Not merely that. His general theory of dreams, described and defended in his work, entitled "The Psychology of Emotion: Morbid and Normal," Kegan Paul, 1925, can hardly be accepted as adequate to do justice to all facts and rationalised fancies of dream-existence. I shall quote his typical explanation of the origin of dreams. "I am going to regard dreams as recurrent psychoses that expose from time to time processes of thought otherwise unconscious, that have been operating unseen before and that will continue to do so again." "I shall be treating dreams in the same way as we have the

symptoms of manic-depressive insanity." "Emotions, neurotic symptoms, delusions, and dreams, are all products of thinking hidden from normal awareness." (P. 480) Dreams, even as neurotic symptoms, are due to irruption into conscious life of something that is not consciously willed.

My contention is that a view like this is not psychologically more advanced than the Upanishadic one. Lines of thinking are hidden from normal awareness. True. But when and under what circumstances do these esoteric and buried lines of submerged thinking "irrupt" into the focus of consciousness? Are there any laws or observed uniformities that govern the "irruption"? If so, what are they? Prof. MacCurdy who rightly complains that the crux of the dream-problem has not yet been properly grasped, has not himself formulated the laws of combinations of dream-imagery. I have no desire to indulge in any cheap tit for tat. I miss in his work any formulation of the laws of the combination of the unconscious images projected into the dream-structure. Let that alone.

To put the question direct. Why is Prof. MacCurdy so anxious to study dreams on the analogy drawn from manic-depressive insanity? Janet and others might have endeavoured to bring all emotions within the clutches of psycho-pathological processes. That is hardly sufficient justification why the analogy drawn from manic-depressive insanity should be the guiding factor in a psychological study or investigation of the dream-problem. I venture to suggest that a pre-eminently medical mentality is responsible for that attitude of Prof. MacCurdy and the methodological approach to the problem of dreams dictated and determined by that attitude. Why should it be assumed that while in the dream-state we are abnormal, only not so abnormal as that of a manic-depressive patient? Dreams, dreamless sleep, and waking states may

all be regarded as sharing the same normality. MacCurdy appears to indicate a reciprocal relationship more or less. A study of dreams helps a better understanding of neurotic mentality, while a study of the latter helps a better understanding of the former. But the Upanishads never take the point that dreams are to be studied and interpreted in the light of or in the same way as symptoms in manic-depressive insanity. What is perhaps the most acute difficulty which I feel—and others are bound to feel it too—relates to the "why" of the irruption of the unconscious images into conscious thought. It may be contended in reply that the "why" of things can never be answered. Seeing however that such an irruption from the weird and outlandish realm of the unconscious, of images, thoughts, emotions, volitions, into the focus of consciousness, is the life-breath of MacCurdy's hypothesis, one is entitled to expect some light on the "why" and the "wherefore" of such an irruption.

## II

In a chapter on "Recent Theories of Dreams," H. L. Hollingworth, Ph.D., of the Columbia University, has examined some theories of dreams ("Psychology of Thought, Approached through Studies of Sleeping and Dreaming," D. Appleton, 1926). He refers to the classical interpretation of Freud. I criticised the wish-fulfilment theory in my paper to the Science Congress of 1927. He refers also to the theory of Dr. Rivers, which I examined last year in the light of the Upanishadic psychology. To Horton a dream-process is a "trial perception," i.e., an attempted response to one or more cues either sensory or psychic. (Horton quoted by Hollingworth.) Hollingworth himself endeavours to explain dreams in reference to an all-inclusive doctrine of "red-integration," which, according to him, accounts for all life-behaviour. What is redintegration? A complex antece-

dent ABCD evokes a response XYZ. On a next occasion, the response XYZ, total or partial, can be evoked even by a fraction of ABCD, say A or B or C or D, in virtue of the fraction having participated earlier in a totality. So is a dream. A fraction of a stimulus sets up responses resulting in combinations of dream-imagery, even though the earlier totality-antecedent might never be forthcoming.

I am sure MacCurdy will complain that this redintegration never gives the laws according to which dream-imagery would combine. There is no knowing which fraction of a given antecedent would evoke which response-fraction, as the response might be associated with a series of preparatory reactions as well. There is the rub. Even so, the hypothesis of "trial perceptions" is one-sided and narrow. Is the "trial perception" series one which is consciously undertaken by the subject in the interests of his successful waking life? That cannot be. The subject has no control over the organisation or succession of "trial perception." If, on the other hand, we are bound to admit that the subject is willy-nilly obliged to submit to "trial perceptions," there is no meaning in their being christened "trial perceptions." How again is this "trial" compatible with the sense some dreams actually reveal and the sense which yet others are made to reveal on subsequent analysis or the sense which is practically squeezed out of dream?

### III

Let me now turn to an examination of some Upanishadic texts which reveal an undoubtedly psychological outlook and speculative insight into the significance of the problem of dream and its solution. In the course of my paper, submitted to the previous year's Science Congress, I had mentioned and extracted some of the relevant Upanishadic texts. I shall devote this section to a special and exclusive discussion of a

very short yet profoundly significant Upanishad—the *Mandukya*. Everything in this universe is Brahman. The finite self is Brahman. The finite self passes through or experiences four states. The waking state is first described. Secondly, the dream state. Thirdly, the state of dreamless sleep. Fourthly, the state of oneness of the finite and the Infinite. The term used is *Pada*. It does not mean a foot as in the case of the quadruped it does. It stands for a quarter, a fraction, a necessary state through which the subject passes. The waking state is described. The familiar sacrificial fire is personified. By means of seven limbs and nineteen mouths the Atman-fire consumes objects of external reality. He is described as *Sthulabhuk*, i.e. consuming or eating up the gross, concrete, manifest external reality. He is also *Bahihpragna*, i.e. his awareness or consciousness is directed towards external reality. It represents the analogue of extrovert existence in all waking consciousness.

The dream state is next described. The fire of the previous paragraph is transformed into smokeless brilliance, radiance or effulgence. Seven limbs and nineteen mouths are repeated. In contrast to *Bahihpragna*, the term *Antahpragna* is used. Instead of the previous *Sthulabhuk* of the waking state, we come across *Praviviktabhuk*. New light will be shed on the psychology of dreams, if the terms used are carefully analysed in their connotations.

The third is the state of dreamless sleep. A reference to the nineteen mouths is significantly missing. Nor is there any reference to the seven limbs. The variety, the multiplicity and complexity of waking life is all enveloped in total darkness as it were. The subject withdraws deep into himself. There is only one face. That is the subject having the face of *Chetah*, inherent spiritual light which is spoken of.

The fourth is the state of final libera-

tion, which according to the Advaita Vedanta, does not and cannot admit of any description by means of linguistic and conceptual medium, and which can therefore be attempted to be described in negative terms as "not this," "not that," and so forth.

#### IV

Metaphysical postulates and pre-suppositions have to be laid aside for purposes of a strictly psychological investigation. The Brahman may be identical with Atman, as in Advaita, or may not, as in Dvaita. The starting point for all strictly psychological inquiry is the nervous system, the psychophysical organism, some spiritual or psychical entity encased or encaged within a nervous system. The first point emphasised by the Upanishads is that the subject is obliged to experience four states which are his birth-right. The waking state supplies the material for dreams, at any rate some material of outstanding importance and pre-eminent significance. That is described at the outset. I do not believe it is a chance coincidence that in the personification of the subject as god of fire the terms *Saptanga* (seven-limbed) and *Ekonavimsatimukha* (nineteen-mouthed) are repeated both in the description of the waking state and that of the dream-state. The analogue of the extrovert attitude in normal life readily forms part of the stock of everybody's waking life. An experiencing subject and an environment are indispensable. Life is a reaction between the subject and his environment. By means of nineteen mouths external reality is eaten up by the subject. What are the nineteen? Five intellectual sense organs, five activity organs, five breaths, Manas, Buddhi, Ahankara, and Chitta, together form the nineteen mouths. The sense-stimuli impinging on the organism from external reality are to be interpreted, reintegrated, and their synthesis effected. Sense-manifold has

to be synthesised and brought under the categories of the understanding. The four last-named stand for the different aspects of the subject's synthesising activity. Life can be a successful adjustment only when the meaning and significance of stimuli from external reality are adequately and fully realised.

#### V

It is significant that in the description of the dream state, the terms *Saptanga* and *Ekonavimsatimukha* are repeated. The contrast between the waking and dream states is embodied in the terms *Antahpragna*, *Pravivikta-bhuk*, and *Taijasa*. Extrovert and introvert will not be quite accurate or adequate. In waking state the pre-eminent and prominent interest attaches itself to adjustment to external reality—an environment, physical, social *et hoc*. In the dream state, on the other hand, the interest is withdrawn from external reality and concentrated on the world of images, on the internal. That is not a deliberate or voluntary transfer of interest. That is inevitable in the nature of things.

Our waking life is the source of experience. Our stock has to be replenished from the waking state. A world, an environment, is indispensable. Apparatus for the reception and co-ordination of stimuli is essential. Categories of the understanding are inevitable to synthesise the sense-manifold and assign it meaning, and appreciate values. The nineteen mouths figuratively indicate the sense-channels for reception and co-ordination of stimuli and the categories or the mental factors of synthesis. What do the seven limbs signify? *Chhandogya* in a passage in the 5th Adhyaya, 18th Khanda, makes mention of nearly a dozen limbs of the fire-god. Why should the limbs be restricted to seven in the present context?

It seems to me that the seven limbs are intended indirectly to suggest the



five cosmic elements,—Earth, Water, Fire, Air, Akasa (perhaps in the sense of empty space, or Ether, if that speculation be permitted), Time and Space *qua* entering into the constitution of the human experience. The cosmic elements do find their replica in the nervous system. The elements constitute the environment in which the subject lives, moves, and has his being, in short, external reality.

## VI

The subject is *Bahihpragna*. His awareness or consciousness is directed to external reality. That is in waking state. In dreams, he is *Antahpragna*. His awareness or consciousness is directed inwards. In the waking state he is *Sthulabhuk*, i.e., taking in or assimilating the gross, manifest, external reality. In the dream state he takes in or enjoys or assimilates the *Pravivikta*, the subtle, the unmanifest, internal reality of imagery and image-world. Contact with external reality is amplifying and augmenting experience every moment of our existence. The contact is to be cut or switched off at the onset of sleep.

Fatigue is the law of musculature or muscular energisation. This was realised by the Upanishads. A passage in *Bṛihadaranyaka*, 1-5-21, definitely states that sense organs become fatigued. *Sramyatyeva vak*, *Sramyati chakshuh*, etc.—Voice is fatigued. Eye is fatigued. Ear gets fatigued. Profound deep sleep is inevitable. Repair, rehabilitation, and rejuvenation or reconstruction of the fatigued nervous tissues is going on in sleep. Only the sense organs are fatigued. Mind is not. Vital functions continue intact. The respiratory, circulatory and the gastric functions are yet on even in sleep. They constitute sufficient and adequate stimuli for dreams.

Central initiation or excitation of dream-imagery can be due to the physiological functions themselves. Or a

psychical stimuli-set is indicated. Escape is sought from the hard, stubborn realities of life. Dissatisfaction with the values of waking existence is the psychical stimulus-set for the creation and projection of dream-imagery. *Svapno bhutva.....atikramati mrityorupani*, 4-3-7, is a significant text. Sankara and Madhva might interpret the passage to suit their own respective metaphysical exigencies. To a psychological quest the metaphysical implications and commitments are hardly relevant. Escape from the hard and fatiguing realities of waking life is sought in sleep and dreams. In the latter the escape is not so profound or satisfactory. In the former it is.

The fatigue is physical as well as mental. Mental fatigue results from maladjustment, or inability to secure adjustment, over-estimation or under-estimation of our abilities and capacities to tide over a difficulty or effect an adjustment. The physical fatigue occurs quicker. Mental fatigue not so quick. When the affairs small and big of the waking state have not yet been settled, when accounts have not been properly settled, physical fatigue becomes overwhelming and there is the onset of sleep resulting in the switching off of contact with external reality on account of the *Srama*, fatigue of the sensory channels of communication.

## VII

But other physiological systems are active. They in concert with the residuum of maladjustment, carried over and brought forward as it were from the waking into the sleep state, a maladjustment that is pre-eminently mental, or a state of suspense or indecision brought about by lack of adjustment, would be sufficient to account for the creation of dreams. The *Bṛihadaranyaka* sketches with remarkable psychological insight and analytical acumen the following transition. 1. *Samprasada* and *Svapnanta* are terms used to

denote the dreamless sleep state. From *Samprasada* a transition occurs to *Svapna*, i.e. dream state. 2. From *Svapna* there occurs a transition to *Buddhanta* or the waking state. 3. From *Buddhanta* once more there occurs a transition to *Svapnanta*, dreamless sleep.

There is a very important point to note that the transition is inevitable. No voluntary inhibition can be exercised to stop the transition. A reciprocal transition from sleep into dreams and from dreams into sleep is also indicated before the break of sleep and dreams by the transition into the *Buddhanta*. Escape is sought from the fatiguing realities of life. There is some escape, some freedom from the troubles, worries, tribulations and turmoils of waking life. There is a more profound and safer escape in the state of sleep. It is pertinent to inquire why the transition is not confined to profound sleep stage alone. The term *Antahpragna* would explain it. The subject's activities are turned inwards. Fatigue of the sense organs does not mean fatigue of the mind. The subject's mental activity in-turned, acting in concert with the fatigue, creates and projects the dream-imagery.

### VIII

1. The *Prasnopanishad*, as I have explained in a previous paper, maintains that in dreams the subject experiences his *Mahima* (on which term I am prepared to stake my all), the creative activity or majesty or greatness.

2. *Brihadaranyaka* propounds the theory that escape from fatigue is sought, and sketches the transition from sleep to dream, from dream to sleep, and from both to the waking life or state.

3. The *Chhandogya* (8—10) contains the *Mahima*-theory of the *Prasna Upanishad*. *Mahiyamanascharati*, says the *Chhandogya* text.

4. Half a dozen other Upanishadic texts referred to by me in a previous paper account for the dreams as being

due to the creative activity of the mind on the raw material supplied by the *Vasanas*, images of the unconscious and subconscious realm.

What then is our conclusion? Dreams and dream-experiences are to be regarded as governed by a law of compensation. Compensation for what? For the lack of proper adjustment of the subject to the circumstances and conditions of waking existence. Dreams bring on their own revenges even as the whirligig of time. Somehow, not in the Bradleyan sense, the subject lacks in the matter of endowment, equipment, energy, environment and exercise of his volitions. Why should there be such a lack in any given individual and why should individuals themselves differ in congenital endowment and equipment and subsequent environments and opportunities, would be a problem for metaphysicians to wrangle over. For purposes of a strictly psychological investigation, it is sufficient to note that there is such a lack, a maladjustment and difference among individuals. "Am I my brother's keeper?" one might ask. Others are bound to have similar quests and queries, similar doubts and difficulties. These are not conflicts in the sense of the term adopted by Dr. Rivers.

Each individual has his own small Utopia where he hones to be monarch of all he surveys. It may be a social Utopia. May be a political one. May be in fact anything. The concretisation of the Utopia may not be possible in the nature of things, or may not commend itself to a particular state of society in which the lot of the individual might be chanced to have been thrown. Round men are put in square holes. They have to get on. Others rebel against their destiny in vain. Is there no compensation for all this? Do we not witness phenomena in concrete experience that appear to be the very negation of accepted principles, standards and values of morality? A perfectly contented resignation to the course of waking existence is not pos-

sible if desirable and not desirable if possible. Some compensation is necessary. The spiritual value and importance of an individual, however obscure and humble he might be, cannot be inferior to that of one however exalted he might be. Waking existence does little or no justice to the fundamental equality of the individuals which is being loudly claimed and proclaimed, but neither recognised nor achieved. The poor man has his compensation in dreams when he imagines to be rich if you please. I am not prepared to admit that the poor man has a suppressed wish to get rich or enjoy riches and that this suppressed wish is gratified in dreams. There may be no such wish at all, esoteric or exoteric, suppressed or expressed. His *Mahima*, in the language of the *Prasna Upanishad*, he has a right to experience or enjoy and he does it.

Apart from compensation, dreams bring on their own revenges. The self-complaisance, the insolence, and the arrogance, with which individuals look upon their fellowmen reappear in dreams where the tables are turned. The biter of the waking existence is bit in the dream state. Faint hearts might draw a lesson if they like that dreams are premonitory.

## IX

I shall sum up the leading conclusions so far indicated. 1. Dreams are Nature's own arrangement for affording the subject some escape from the hard and stubborn and fatiguing realities of waking life. This escape can hardly be summed up under Freud's wish-fulfilment hypothesis or the conflict-solution theory of Dr. Rivers or the "Trial Perception" or even the "Redintegration" hypotheses noted above. 2. The onset of fatigue and sleep, when the problems big and small of waking life have not been settled or could not be settled, is responsible for their reappearance in dreams. Our errors in our dealing with the environment cause dreams. 3. Mind's creative activity acting on the

raw material of the *Vasanas*, the store-house of the unconscious, would account for the bizarre and outlandish elaboration of forms of dream-imagery.

Sense there is in some dreams. Out of some others sense is squeezed or extracted after analysis. The latter is of doubtful value. I do not believe the sense *prima facie* discernible or squeezed out is of any help in the settlement of the affairs of waking life. I am aware of the contention that the sense is made use of to rid mental abnormalities and maladies. But as I said at the outset clinical data should be kept separate from the psychological.

The Upanishadic texts quoted above consider that the transition from one state to another is a matter of course and inevitable. That at any rate is the view of the *Mandukya* text. What is a matter of course and inevitable need not be studied on the analogy of the manic-depressive insanity. I cannot help regarding that the otherwise brilliant treatment of the dream-problem by Prof. MacCurdy is vitiated by an unmethodological mixture of the clinical with psychological material. To the question: What are the laws according to which the images of the unconscious—the *Vasanas*—combine? I venture to render a provisional answer that in the light of the *Mandukya* text which regards transition from waking to sleep, to dream and back to waking as a matter of course, the laws of association of ideas and images that account for the part played by them in the constitution and direction of waking life, would themselves explain the dream-phenomena as well *mutatis mutandis*. You may christen the laws of combination "Association Laws," "Redintegration Laws" or by any other equally catching name. One thing is certain. If the succession of dream-imagery reveals any sense we need not mind it. If it does not reveal any, we need evince no undue anxiety to squeeze sense out of it.

The Upanishadic conclusion indicates a step in advance. Waking, sleep, and

dream states are all to be transcended and there is a fourth wherein only the subject can experience unalloyed bliss undisturbed and uninterrupted. Escape from the hard realities afforded by dreams and sleep is temporary and transient. The inevitable lapse into waking life more poignantly brings home to the subject the tyranny of life and its problems.

The waking life is the crux. Its little problems have to be solved immediately and the situation rounded off. Efficient adjustment is not wholly within the voluntary control of the individual. Maladjustment is inevitable. Think no more of it. Embark on a fresh career, a new quest and original adventure. Always take care not to carry into your heads any residuum of the concerns of waking life and project them into dreams. It is a large order. That is the only effective way of escaping from dreams pleasant and unpleasant. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. Utter a prayer if you please and close the wearied eyelids with the conviction that a day is over, a day which should be one of service, sacrifice and a sane adjustment. There is a high probability, one who begins sleep with that mentality would not be troubled with any dreams at all. Dreams pleasant and unpleasant are unnecessary. At the time of the *indriyoparama*, cutting off of the contact of sense organs with external reality, the vital bodily functions and disgruntled and brooding mentality would appear to be the only stimuli to dreams. If the latter are eradicated the former would be rendered impotent to project dream-imagery.

In the eternal clash of cultures, vagaries of values, shifting of standards, incompatibility between anticipation and achievement due to a wrong calculation, the individual should realise his own capabilities and limitations first. Non-realisation leads to maladjustment. The individual is left to brood over retrospectively the irretrievable past. Prospective anxiety for the future is there

too. They are the mental stimuli for dreams. They cannot be brought under Freudian suppressed wish or any other equally narrow category. It is gratuitous to assume that all individuals have suppressed wishes. Similarly it is gratuitous to assume that conflicts of the waking life would be solved in dreams, as indeed does Dr. Rivers.

But it is a bare statement of fact when the Upanishadic text suggests that the subject wants *Samprasada*, the calm, composed happiness or escape from the realities, tyrannies, terrors and contradictions of waking existence. There is a difference of degrees in the *Samprasada*. Sleep gives the best escape from waking life. To a less extent do dreams. Here are the Upanishadic catch-words. 1. *Scupno bhavita atikramati mrityo rupani*. The subject in sleep and dreams escapes from the unpleasant realities of waking existence. 2. *Mahimanamanubhavati, Manjya-manascharati*, etc. The subject is the recipient of Nature's compensation in the shape of dreams for certain handicaps and disabilities from which he suffers and from which no escape in waking life is possible and on account of which he has to gibbet himself as the laughing-stock to the mischievously-minded of his fellowmen. Along with compensation dreams bring to others their own revenges. 3. The most important contribution made by the Upanishadic seers is that waking life, dreams, sleep, the three are to be transcended and there is a fourth state, in which alone the subject enjoys perfect bliss. A well-regulated and disciplined waking life with a complete realisation of its potentialities and limitations would hardly engender any dreams. The subject can boldly face Nature and say: Look here, I want none of your compensations, none of the dream-revenges. I have realised my capabilities and limitations. My record is clean. Why should there be limitations, difference between individuals in equipment, endowment, and environmental facilities

and why should grumbling due to them engender dreams, is as good a question as why should there be evil and imperfection in this the best of all possible worlds. The student of dream-psychology

need not worry over it. Life in conformity with the ideals of *Vairagya*, of unattachment, would reduce to a negligible minimum the dream-originating factors.

## THE MAGICIAN

BY SWAMI ATULANANDA

Long, long ago, in the days when India was the land of finest culture and highest achievements; when monarchs and sages mixed freely to discuss the great problems of life, and savants repaired to royal courts to expound their doctrines; when artisans of special merit, sustained by State treasures peacefully plied their trades; when research work in the fields of science and psychology flourished, and philosophy reached its highest pinnacle, Lavana, king of Uttara Pandava, met with a strange experience.

The king, be it known, was a man of extraordinary wisdom, wealth and prowess. Saraswati, the goddess of learning, presided over his intellect, and Lakshmi, the goddess of prosperity, smiled favourably upon all his undertakings, while Vijaya Lakshmi, the goddess of victory, inspired his sword, bringing sure success in every battle he fought with neighbouring kings.

At the time of which we write there was peace in the kingdom, and great prosperity. Assisted by able ministers to look after State affairs, Lavana had many moments of leisure when he could indulge in his favored occupation of contemplating serious problems pertaining to the mysteries of Existence.

One question constantly puzzled his brain: Whence came this Universe? How is it sustained? Whereunto does it resolve?

Though he studied many books, and consulted the wisest scholars of the land, on this one subject he remained unconvinced. The world, he knew, was ephemeral, unstable, like a pass-

ing dream, like a mirage in the desert. Today it is, tomorrow when our eyes are closed in death, it is no more. This was clear enough, self-evident. But there remained these other questions: Whence and whither? Is there anything beyond the phenomenal? To these questions he had found no satisfactory solution. For not only did he want to satisfy his reason, he also demanded demonstration.

Then, something unexpected occurred. And to his great surprise in the flash of a moment his doubts were cleared. It happened thus:

One day there came to the capital of Uttara Pandava a famous magician of marvelous powers. His fame as the greatest of all living conjurers and enchanters had preceded him, and on his arrival in the capital many invitations awaited him to perform before the wealthiest and most prominent notables of the town. For the rumor had spread that this man was accomplished not only in the art of legerdemain but also in the performance of strange psychological tricks.

But now to the disappointment and annoyance of those who had invited him in the expectation of witnessing his feats, the stranger refused to satisfy their curiosity. To the most generous offers of remuneration he turned deaf ears. No explanation was forthcoming. Every effort to make him consent was met with the simple remark, "I will perform before the king." To this he adhered obstinately, and the statement had to be accepted as final.

Before long the king was informed

about the strange behaviour of the foreign magician who refused large sums of money to exhibit his powers. "Perhaps," the king concluded, "he is willing to perform before me only expecting an unreasonably large reward that other wealthy persons cannot offer."

Curious to see what the man could do, but at the same time wary of some kind of deception, the king decided to send one of his ministers to interview the stranger, and to find out in covered ways what his expectations might be.

Accordingly the minister went out on his mission. To his astonishment he found the magician a man of simple habits and an open mind. There seemed to be no deception. The magician explained that he had come to Uttara Pandava with the sole intention of showing his art before the king, and not to earn money. "The king," he said, "will be greatly benefited witnessing my performance, for he is a wise man. I do not play simply to satisfy the curiosity of ignorant people. And I will accept no reward for my performance. Only under this condition will I consent to appear at the court."

The minister returned, satisfied that the man was honest and not a common charlatan, as many of his profession were. He reported his interview to the king, who immediately sent a messenger to the magician inviting him to the palace to show his tricks.

The invitation was accepted, and on the appointed day, one bright morning, the conjurer announced his presence at the palace.

The king, seated in the Hall of Audience, on his golden throne encrusted with gems, and surrounded by his statesmen, sent word to the stranger to enter the Hall.

The conjurer, a tall man with piercing black eyes, of dignified bearing, clad in a yellow loin cloth with upper body bare, after paying due respect to the royal presence, asked permission to

begin his performance. This granted he began his tricks. He had brought no paraphernalia except a large bunch of beautiful peacock feathers. These he placed on his right side.

His sleight of hand work was remarkable. Stretching his arm above his head he would pluck from the air, fresh fruits and flowers which he offered to his audience to taste and smell. Different objects materialized and dissolved at his wish. Strange music was heard in the sky, and even the daylight in the Hall became dim and bright at his command. Pigeons, coming from nowhere, began to flutter about the throne, and when the king stretched out his hands to catch one, it suddenly melted into air. It was as if the *devas* themselves had to obey the bidding of this strange man, for beautiful forms came and disappeared before the very eyes of the spectators.

Clouds began to form against the ceiling of the Hall, and rain came down in showers, but the water did not wet the audience. It was a marvelous performance. "Supernatural!" the courtiers exclaimed.

King Lavana was amazed witnessing these wonderful feats. And when the magician announced that now he would perform a trick for which he requested the king's special permission, the king consented gladly. He had now full confidence in the honesty and cleverness of the performer.

The magician after bowing low before the throne, now for the first time took up his bunch of peacock feathers, and uttering sacred *mantrams*, began to wave them in wide circles before the king. The graceful waving of the beautiful feathers seemed to fascinate the king's mind. He could not take away his eyes, following every motion of the bunch of feathers. And when the feathers began to emit light, and began to scintillate and sparkle like a firebrand, the king was perfectly enchanted.

Then, suddenly, the feathers dis-

appeared, and before the throne stood a magnificent stallion white as snow. A courtier of the king of Sindhu holding the stallion by the head, announced that this noblest of all steeds, fleetest than the wind and stronger than Indra's charger, was a present to King Lavana from his royal master. The magician now pointing towards the stallion asked the king to mount it, for in all the world no better animal could be found.

But now, as the king was about to get up from his throne to examine the noble steed, suddenly he lost consciousness, and with eyes fixed, sat in a trance, his body rigid, like a Yogi in Samadhi.

Seeing this sudden change come over the king the ministers became alarmed. But in a few moments the king's body relaxed, and having recovered his consciousness, he was in his normal state again. But the horse was gone. The king saw only the magician still waving the peacock feathers.

The ministers anxiously enquired of the king what had come over him so suddenly. Then the king related a strange story. The king said :

"When the magician waved the peacock feathers, and uttered some strange words, I began to feel giddy. But I heard the magician ask me to mount a horse that stood before the throne. It was a beautiful animal, a present from the king of Sindhu, a messenger told me. In full consciousness I got up from my throne and mounted the horse. I galloped away forgetful of time and circumstances. Fleetest and fleetest the horse went, and I became intoxicated with joy going at such a great speed. On and on we went till I came to a strange country. Before I realized it, it was evening and I found myself still galloping at a terrific speed, now in a forest. Then, just as I was thinking of turning back, I was caught in a creeper hanging across the road from a high tree. The horse ran on, leaving me hung in the air entwined by the creeper. I was

caught in such a way that I could not free myself. Night came, and a cold wind began to blow rocking me to and fro. I was hungry and thirsty. I called for help, but no living person came near. Thus I spent the night.

"At last dawn came, and the sun arose. My predicament was the same. Only my hunger and thirst had increased. I was ready to give half my kingdom for some food and a drink of water. I struggled but could not get free. With each effort I seemed to get more enmeshed. I was exhausted. I could struggle no more. I was ready to resign myself to my miserable lot—death from starvation in a foreign land.

"Just then I heard a voice, singing. And I saw a girl come in my direction. When she came near, she was startled seeing me, and ran away. I called her and she turned back. She carried a basket and a knife. With the knife she cut down the creeper, and I was free.

"Once on my feet again I noticed that the girl was of low caste, black and ugly. She had come to cut grass in the forest. Then I saw that she had food with her and a jar of water. I asked her to give me food and drink. 'By no means,' she replied. 'I see you are a person of high birth, and I am an outcast. If you eat my food, the sin of breaking caste will fall upon me.'

"After much entreaty she said, 'I will give you food if you marry me.' I argued, tried to persuade her, I expostulated. But I could not move her mind. In desperation, at last, I consented. It was a question of life and death. I ate the food and drank the water. But my heart was sad.

"When my hunger and thirst were appeased, the girl took me by the hand and led me to her village. It was a vile place. Everywhere was the stench of carcasses drying in the sun. Her home was a wretched, stinking hut. But there was no escape. I had given my word, and we were married. For an entire week the villagers celebrated.

They drank large quantities of toddy, and they feasted on the flesh of monkeys, fowls, crows and pigs. It was a dreadful affair.

"However, we were married, and in course of time we had three children. In some way I had become reconciled to my lot. I even felt some affection for my wife and children. I supported them by hunting.

"Then there came a long drought and sand storms. The air was saturated with dust. The earth dried up. The village became deserted. The weak died; the strong fled away. I also fled with my wife and children. For days we travelled with scarcely any food. The children cried constantly, for they were hungry. We were all exhausted. Then my wife fell ill and died on the way. My heart sank. The children were too weak to go on. There was no food. Before the day was over the youngest child also died.

"Then I lost courage. I sank down in despair. At last I resolved to put an end to my own life and that of my emaciated children. I built a huge fire, and holding a child under each arm approached it to end our lives together in the roaring flames. But I stumbled and fell down knocking my head against a stone.

"Then I awoke from my trance, and, O wonder! I found myself here, seated on the throne—not as a low caste man, but as King Lavana."

The story over, all eyes involuntarily turned towards the stranger who had worked this miracle. He stood a little apart, gently smiling, the peacock feathers still in his hand. But he remained silent at their enquiring glances.

Then the king broke the silence, and addressing the magician spoke:

"Who are you, stranger? You are not an ordinary man. In a moment you have solved my doubts by giving me one great experience. O wonderful is the power of the mind! Now I have realized that it is the mind that creates, sustains and dissolves all phenomenal existence. All worlds, all experiences, have their origin in the mind. Time, space and causation are but the fabrications of the mind. Now I realize that what the scriptures teach is true; that the word of the sages is true. You are a Rishi, you are my Guru. Stay with me in the palace forever."

Here, the magician gently interrupted the king. "Your Majesty," he said, "it was to clear your mind of doubt that I came to your country and refused to perform before others. You have learned a great truth. Remember it always. But do not stop there. Push on with your enquiry. For there is a greater truth still to be realized by you. For beyond the mind is the Atman, your real self. Know that Self. Knowing it you will be free from the trammels of birth and death; you will be free forever. This is the Atman of which the scriptures speak. Know, Your Majesty, that *thou art That*."

At this juncture there suddenly arose from the feet of the magician a luminous vapor, enclothing his entire body. And the vapor increased in luminosity, so that the spectators had to shield their eyes from its brilliance.

Then the vapor dissolved again and when the spectators looked up, the magician had vanished, and with him the bunch of peacock feathers.



## PRACTICE OF RELIGION

BY ANANDA.

In the Outer Court Still.

Our remarks towards the end of last month's article have raised several questions. We said therein: "As religion is not taken seriously by the majority of people, more tangible means, more appealing intermediaries must be found for men and associated with religion." And we mentioned morality, knowledge, service, etc. as those intermediaries. We also said: "Spiritualisation of the concerns of life is all right. But most men can only slowly progress that way without substantial aid from morality, art, knowledge, action and service." These statements do not seem to fully accord with prevailing beliefs. Of course, none denies the need of morality on the path to religion and in the religious life itself. But most men will argue that there are other convenient means of attaining to the fineness of perception, which is, according to us, an essential condition of religious practice. At least three such distinct means may be mentioned: (1) *Sandhyā-bandanam* and such other daily and occasional practices; (2) repetition and singing of the names and praise of God or of some sacred formula; and (3) practice of *Prāṇāyāma*.

We admit that these are efficacious means. We also said: "The sincere observance of the forms, and adherence to the beliefs are essentially necessary for him and play an important part in the evolution of his spiritual consciousness." But we must not be easily led away by prevailing customs. The *Sandhya* ceremonies are not equally effective in all persons, though all equally observe the forms. Much depends on the mental conditions of the persons practising them. Nothing is in vain. Even in the worst cases, such

daily practices will leave some effect behind. The fact that a man detaches himself twice or thrice daily from his multifarious pursuits and sits quiet and silent for some minutes at a time, trying to concentrate his mind on supermundane realities, is itself significant. But with other substantial helps, these little doses will not cure the disease. What good will the *Sandhyā-bandanam* of a man do to him, if he passes his whole day in vicious and worldly pursuits? The daily activities themselves require to be pure and exalted, if any appreciable progress is to be made towards religion. Herein lies the need of morality, art, etc. One is not asked to give up one's ceremonial practices. With the improvement of one's mind, these will become more and more potent and significant. But along with these, the culture of morality, knowledge, art, etc. is essential. These, of course, must be associated with religion to be sufficiently effective.

We are discussing this question here, because there are many in India to-day, —and for the matter of that, everywhere in the world, wherever religion is believed in and practised,—who believe that if they only continue with the prescribed practices, they will eventually reach the gate of Heaven. The gate of Heaven is not so easily accessible. It cannot be denied that a determined practice of rites and ceremonies produces a kind of power in man. For the matter of that, all kinds of concentration on subtle objects will produce a similar effect. But does man ever lack power? We always have more than enough of it. What we really need is not power but sound judgment and earnest desire to make a correct use of the power we already possess. And

when we have learnt to correctly utilise the powers that are already at our disposal, fresh powers will come to us of themselves. Cases are often seen, in which a man, having somehow acquired a little of supernormal power, becomes arrogant and does incalculable mischief to others and himself. *Character* is our sure guard at every point of the upward journey. But of that we shall speak more later on.

Similarly of the repetition and singing of the Holy names. The repetition or singing by itself is of little value. All depends on the state of the mind. If we repeat mechanically, it will be scarcely effective. If we repeat with determination, but without a sufficiently purified mind, we may acquire some unusual power, but not any real spirituality. Every mind has a certain natural level of action and aspiration, according to which it feels and utilises whatever comes across it. Unless the natural level of our mind is spiritual, we shall fail to be benefited spiritually by the supernormal powers that we may acquire by determined efforts at concentration.

Sri Chaitanya prescribed that the names of the Lord should be sung by one who is humbler than even grass and patient like a tree, and who, being himself devoid of all sense of self-esteem, respects others sincerely. Here the essential conditions of the singing of the Lord's names being effective, have been clearly laid down. We must read between the lines to understand their true significance. Mere outward humility and patience are not meant. The inner purification is essential. True humility comes only when we have risen high above worldly considerations ; so that the standard of worldly judgment no longer affect us, and we feel in our inmost heart, every moment of our life, the presence of the Infinite, Omnipotent and Omniscient. Without at least a partial perception of the spiritual immensity, true humility is impossible ; it will be only mock humility.

We must also distinguish between humility and timidity. In most cases our humility is only another form of timidity and ineffectuality, we are cowed down by the immensity of powers playing around us, and feel that we cannot play up to it. But the aspirant of God must not be cowed down by any worldly powers. He must be above them. But is it easy to defy the world? We may well guess what a tremendous training the mind must pass through before the conditions as laid down by Sri Chaitanya can be properly fulfilled.

In India, especially in Bengal, we find people, whenever they think of becoming religious, taking to protracted singing of the Lord's names. This is no doubt good. But in most cases, the necessity of fulfilling the preliminary conditions is clean forgotten. The result is scarcely hopeful. People become peculiar and unnaturally emotional. The consequences of such emotionalism were thus described by Swami Vivekananda, in course of conversation with a disciple :

"During meditation, suppress the emotional side altogether. That (emotionalism) is a great source of danger. Those that are very emotional, have no doubt their *kundalini* rushing quickly upwards, but it is as quick to come down as to go up. And when it does come down, it leaves the devotee in a state of utter ruin. It is for this reason that *kirtans* and other auxiliaries to emotional development have a great drawback. It is true that by dancing and jumping, etc., through a momentary impulse, that power is made to course upwards, but it is never enduring. On the contrary, when it traces back its course, it rouses violent lust in the individual. Listening to my lectures in America, through temporary excitement many among the audience used to get into an ecstatic state, and some would even become motionless like statues. But on enquiry I afterwards found that many of them had an excess

of the carnal instinct immediately after that state."

*Kirtan*, singing of Divine names and praise, without mental preparations, has this danger. It evokes too much emotion which drags the mind down to dangerously low levels. And the ultimate result is more loss than gain. Yet it is this practice which is considered by many as a most efficacious means of becoming religious!

From what we have said about *Sandhyâ-bandanam* or *Kirtan*, it must not be understood that we condemn them. In all states of our mind they

are more or less efficacious ; and when the mind has been purified and prepared, they are undoubtedly powerful means of spiritual advance. But, in our present earth-bound state, they are not enough in leading us to real religion. They must be powerfully aided by those auxiliaries that we have mentioned before,—morality, art, knowledge, etc. If we think that we may neglect them and reach the portal of religion by means of ritualistic practices alone, we are sadly mistaken.

We have not dealt here with the third suggested means, *Pranayama*. We reserve it for our next article.

## ASHTAVAKRA SAMHITA

BY SWAMI NITYASWARUPANANDA

### CHAPTER I

#### INSTRUCTIONS ON SELF-REALISATIONS.

जनक उवाच ।

कथं ज्ञानमवाप्नोति कथं मुक्तिर्भविष्यति ।

वैराग्यं च कथं प्राप्तमेतद्ब्रूहि मम प्रभो ॥ १ ॥

जनकः Janaka उवाच said :

कथं How (लोकः man) ज्ञानं knowledge अवाप्नोति acquires कथं how मुक्तिः liberation भविष्यति will be कथं how वैराग्यं renunciation प्राप्तं is secured च and प्रभो O Lord एतत् this मम me ब्रूहि tell.

Janaka asked :

1. How can knowledge<sup>1</sup> be acquired? How can liberation<sup>2</sup> be attained? How is renunciation<sup>3</sup> possible?—Tell me this, O Lord.

[1 Knowledge—Realisation of the identity of the individual self and Paramâtman or Brahman which is Existence, Knowledge and Bliss absolute.

2 Liberation—Freedom from all bondages and limitations,—the effect of Knowledge mentioned above, i.e. the complete destruction of all misery and attainment of supreme bliss

3 Renunciation—Non-attachment to the enjoyment of the objects of this world as well as the world beyond. This forms the most important of the four qualifications required of an aspirant of the knowledge of Brahman,—the other three qualifications being (i) discrimination between the real and the unreal, (ii) acquisition of the six cardinal moral virtues—regulation of mind, regulation of the sense-organs, etc., and (iii) intense longing for liberation.]

अष्टावक्र उवाच ।

मुक्तिमिच्छसि चेत्तात विषयान् विषवस्त्यज ।

क्षमार्जवदयातोषसत्यं पीयूषवद्भज ॥ २ ॥

अष्टावक्रः Ashtravakra उवाच said :

तात O child चेत् if ( त्वं you ) मुक्तिं emancipation इच्छसि wish ( तर्हि then ) विषयान् the objects of the senses विषवत् like poison त्यज shun क्षमार्जवदयातोषसत्यं forgiveness, sincerity, kindness, contentment and truth पीयूषवत् like nectar भज seek.

Ashtavakra replied :

2. If you aspire after liberation, my child, shun the objects<sup>1</sup> of the senses as poison and seek forgiveness, sincerity<sup>2</sup>, kindness, contentment and truth<sup>3</sup> as nectar.

[1 Objects, etc.--Attachment to the worldly objects is a great bar to spiritual progress and hence they should be shunned as bitter poison. The implication is that we should drive away all such ideas as 'this is mine', 'that is mine', which spring from the identification of Self with body, mind, etc.

The giving up of external objects implies also the necessity of controlling the sense-organs.

2 Sincerity--"To be one in mind and speech", as Sri Ramakrishna used to put it. He spoke very highly of this virtue as an essential of spiritual discipline.

3 Truth--This virtue also was greatly emphasised by Sri Ramakrishna and was looked upon by him as a precious possession of a spiritual aspirant.

It should be noted here that the cultivation of these virtues implies the control and purification of the internal sense, mind, so that it may reflect more and more of Divine light.

This verse mentions the negative and positive practices of a spiritual aspirant. Giving up attractions for worldly things is the negative practice and cultivation of the moral virtues is the positive.]

न पृथ्वि न जलं नाग्निर्न वायुर्यौर्न वा भवान् ।

एषां साक्षिणमात्मानं चिद्रूपं विद्धि मुक्तये ॥ ३ ॥

भवान् You पृथ्वि earth न not जलं water न not अग्निः fire न not वायुः air न not यौः ether न not वा or ( त्वं you ) मुक्तये for liberation आत्मानं self एषां of these साक्षिणं witness चिद्रूपं consciousness itself विद्धि realise.

3. You are neither earth<sup>1</sup>, nor water, nor fire, nor air, nor ether. In order to attain liberation, realise your self as the knower of all these and consciousness itself.

[Earth, etc.--These are the five elements constituting our body and mind with which we identify our self and become miserable. But our self which is the knower and eternally distinct from the body and the mind which are its objects, is Intelligence itself. Our liberation lies in knowing the self as such.]

यदि देहं पृथक्कृत्य चित्ति विश्राम्य तिष्ठसि ।

अधुनेव सुखी शान्तो बन्धमुक्तो भविष्यसि ॥ ४ ॥

यदि If ( त्वं you ) देहं body पृथक्कृत्य separating चित्ति in Intelligence विश्राम्य resting तिष्ठसि remain ( तर्हि then त्वं you ) अधुना now एव even सुखी happy शान्तः peaceful बन्धमुक्तः free from bondage भविष्यसि will be.

4. If you detach<sup>1</sup> the body and rest in Intelligence, you will at once<sup>2</sup> be happy, peaceful and free from bondage.

[1 *Detach, etc.*—Herein lies the essence of Advaita Sadhana. By identifying the Self with the body which is not-self and thus ascribing to Self the limitations of the body, such as birth, death, old age, disease, etc., we undergo all kinds of misery. The Self really has no connection with the body. So if we can but get rid of this identification, we shall at once be conscious of our self as *Chit* and thus become happy and free from bondage.

2 *At once*—i.e. the very moment the Self is known as distinct from body, because the self is never really affected by body and mind,—they merely hide its glory even as clouds hide the Sun.]

न त्वं विप्रादिको वर्णो नाश्रमी नाश्रमोचरः ।

असङ्गोऽसि निराकारो विश्वसाक्षी सुखी भव ॥ ५ ॥

त्वं You विप्रादिकः with Brāhmana at the beginning वर्णः caste न not आश्रमी belonging to an Ashrama न not अश्रमोचरः visible to the eyes न not (त्वं you) असङ्गः unattached निराकारः formless विश्वसाक्षी witness of all अस्मि are सुखी happy भव be.

5. You do not belong to the Brāhmana or any other caste or to any Ashrama<sup>1</sup>. You are not visible<sup>2</sup> to the eyes. Unattached, formless and witness of all are you. Be happy<sup>3</sup>.

[1 *Ashrama*—the four well-known stages of a Hindu's life,—*Brahmacharya* (Student Life), *Gārhashtya* (Householder's Life), *Vānaprastha* (Forest Life) and *Sannyāsa* (Life of Renunciation).

2 *Visible etc.*—i.e. not perceived by any senses, that is to say, never an object of sense-knowledge.

Neither caste, ashrama or any such thing can be predicated of the Self. The Self therefore has no obligation to perform duties pertaining to them. One must realise oneself as above such obligations,—as unattached, formless, etc.

3 *Happy* i.e. by realising yourself as formless, etc.]

धर्माधर्मौ सुखं दुःखं मानसानि न ते विभो ।

न कर्तासि न भोक्तासि मुक्तप्रायसि सर्वदा ॥ ६ ॥

विभो O all-pervading धर्माधर्मौ virtue and vice सुखं pleasure दुःखं pain मानसानि mental ते yours न not (त्वं you) कर्ता doer न not अस्मि are भोक्ता enjoyer न not अस्मि are सर्वदा ever मुक्तः free एव surely.

6. Virtue and vice,<sup>1</sup> pleasure and pain,<sup>2</sup> are of the mind, not of you, O all-pervading one. You are neither doer nor enjoyer. Verily you are ever free.

[1 *Virtue and vice* These spring respectively from our right and wrong actions (both moral and ceremonial), which are possible only when we think ourselves as doer.

2 *Pleasure and pain*—effects of virtue and vice on the mind.

Virtue and vice, pleasure and pain are all mental. We identify ourselves with the mind and hence these are also ascribed to the Self.]

एको द्रष्टासि सर्वस्य मुक्तप्रायोऽसि सर्वदा ।

अयमेव हि ते बन्धो द्रष्टारं पश्यसीतरम् ॥ ७ ॥

सर्वस्य Of all एको one द्रष्टा seer (त्वं you) अस्मि are सर्वदा ever मुक्तप्रायः really free (त्वं you) अस्मि are हि surely अयं this एव alone ते your बन्धः bondage (यत् that त्वं you) द्रष्टारं the seer इतरं other पश्यसि see.

7. You are the one seer<sup>1</sup> of all and really ever free. Verily this alone is your bondage<sup>2</sup> that you see the seer as other than such.

[1 *One seer*—i.e. you are the one only subject, the entire universe being the object.

2 *Bondage*—It comes from not realising ourselves as the subject, the witness of the universe, and identifying ourselves with the object.]

अहं कर्त्तृत्यहंमानमहाकृष्णाहिर्दशितः ।

नाहं कर्त्तति विश्वासामृतं पीत्वा सुखी भव ॥ ८ ॥

अहं I कर्त्ता doer इति this अहंमानमहाकृष्णाहिर्दशितः bitten by the great black serpent of egoism (त्वं you) अहं I कर्त्ता doer न not इति such विश्वासामृतं nectar of faith पीत्वा drinking सुखी happy भव be.

8. Do you who have been bitten by the great black serpent<sup>1</sup> of the egoism "I am the doer", drink the nectar<sup>2</sup> of the faith "I am not the doer", and be happy.

[1 Black serpent—because egoism kills spiritual consciousness and causes pain.

2 Nectar—It revives and removes all pain. Even so, destruction of egoism revives spiritual consciousness and frees from worldly misery.]

एको विशुद्धबोधोऽहमिति निश्चयवह्निना ।

प्रज्वालयाज्ञानगहनं वीतशोकः सुखी भव ॥ ९ ॥

अहं I एकः one विशुद्धबोधः Pure Intelligence इति this निश्चयवह्निना by the fire of knowledge अज्ञानगहनं the wilderness of ignorance प्रज्वालय burning वीतशोकः free from grief सुखी happy भव be.

9. Burn down the wilderness<sup>1</sup> of ignorance with the fire of the knowledge, "I am the One<sup>2</sup> and pure<sup>3</sup> Intelligence", and be free from grief and be happy.

[1 Wilderness—As one cannot see one's way in the wilderness, even so ignorance obstructs the vision of Truth.

2 One—because nothing exists except the Self.

3 Pure—Self-effulgent. Our present intelligence is not pure, as it always has a not-self as its object.]

यत्र विश्वमिदं भाति कल्पितं रज्जुसर्पवत् ।

आनन्दपरमानन्दः स बोधस्त्वं सुखं चर ॥ १० ॥

यत्र ( बोधे ) In which (Consciousness) इदं this विश्वं universe रज्जुसर्पवत् like a snake in a rope कल्पितं imagined भाति appears (सः that बोधः Consciousness) आनन्दपरमानन्दः Bliss-Supreme Bliss (भवति is) सः that बोधः Consciousness त्वं you (असि are) सुखं happily चर live.

10. That (Consciousness) in which this universe appears, being conceived like<sup>1</sup> a snake in a rope, is Bliss—Supreme Bliss. You are that Consciousness. Be happy.

[1 Like etc. This is a famous analogy of Advaita Vedanta. In the dark of night a rope is mistaken for a snake which has no other reality than the rope itself. The rope does not really become a snake. Even so this universe has no real existence. It is the Self pure Consciousness and Supreme Bliss on which this universe is imagined to exist through ignorance. Consciousness which is the substratum of the universe remains eternally pure and unaffected. We are that Consciousness. Therefore we must cease identifying ourselves with any of these superimposed phenomena and thus be happy.]

मुक्तामिमानी मुक्तो हि वद्धो वद्धाभिमान्यपि ।

किंवदन्तीह सत्येयं या मति सा गतिर्भवेत् ॥ ११ ॥

हि surely मुक्तामिमानी who considers oneself free मुक्तः free वद्धाभिमान्यपि one who considers oneself bound अपि and वद्धः bound या as मति the thought सा so गति attainment भवेत् is इह in this world इयं this किंवदन्ती popular saying सत्या true.

11. One who considers onself free is free indeed and one who considers oneself bound remains bound. "As one thinks, so one becomes," is a popular saying in this world, which is true.

[This is a very significant utterance pregnant with an invaluable instruction for Self-realisation. In reality the Self is ever free, it never enters into a state of bondage. It is our ignorance that we think ourselves bound; and this thought makes our bondage persist and continue. If however we constantly think ourselves as the eternally free Self, the binding thought will vanish and we shall attain liberation.]

आत्मा साक्षी विभुः पूर्ण एको मुक्तिचिदक्रियः ।

असङ्गो निस्पृहः शान्तो भ्रमात् संसारवानिव ॥ १२ ॥

आत्मा Self साक्षी witness विभुः all-pervading पूर्णः perf. ct. एकः one मुक्तः free चित् Intelligence अक्रियः actionless असङ्गः unattached निस्पृहः desireless शान्तः quiet भ्रमात् through illusion संसारवान् of the world इव as if ( भवति is ).

12. The Self is the witness and all-pervading perfect, one, free, Intelligence, actionless, unattached, desireless and quiet. Through illusion it appears of the world<sup>1</sup>.

[1 Of the world—bound by the desires of the world and involved in the cycle of birth and re-birth,—unlike what has been described of the Self in this verse.]

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### In this Number.

The present issue opens with a fine and beautiful letter of SWAMI VIVEKANANDA, in which he dwells on some of the essentials of his faith. . . . Our article, *Spiritualising Nationalism*, is an attempted exposition of Swami Vivekananda's nationalism and its ideals and motives. We shall be satisfied if it at least provokes thought where it does not convince. We wanted to quote striking passages from the Swami's writings and utterances in support of our thesis. But limited space has forbidden it. . . . *Notes of Conversations with Swami Turiyananda* are profound and soul-enthraling.—"Not I, but Thou, O Lord!" . . . *Sanskrit Culture in Modern India—I*, by M. M. HARAPRASAD SHASTRI, M.A., C.I.E., HON. D. LITT. is the first half of the address delivered by him as the President of the Oriental Conference held at Lahore last November. We hope to publish the remaining portion next month. M. M. Haraprasad Shastri is a

great Sanskrit, Pali and Prakrit scholar, and has earned international reputation as an Indologist. His address is absorbingly interesting and is packed with information; and it is a vivid picture of the sudden decay of Sanskrit culture under the fatal influence of foreign culture and administration, and its subsequent slow revival. . . . *New Light on Dream-Psychology (From the Upanishadic Sources)* by R. NAGA RAJA SARMA, M.A., L.T. was read by him at the Indian Science Congress held last month at Madras. The writer is a professor of the Presidency College of the same city, and his philosophical contributions to Indian and foreign journals have been highly appreciated. The Professor is well-versed in both Indian and Western philosophy and is thus in a position to undertake comparative studies with ability and profit. Dream is an intriguing phenomenon. And India has undoubtedly made the profoundest researches of all nations into mental phenomena. She can therefore justifiably pronounce on the findings of

Psycho-analysis. . . . SWAMI ATULANANDA contributes an excellent story, *The Magician*, to this number. The Swami is a monk of the Ramakrishna Order. He is well-known to the regular readers of *Prabuddha Bharata* as the master of a fascinating style and author of many beautiful stories. . . . The second article of ANANDA on *Practice of Religion* is *In the Outer Court still*. He is already beset with questions. We wish we could spare him more space. We have still no hesitation in inviting our readers to earnestly join in the discussion. . . . SWAMI NITYASWARUPANANDA has begun the text of *Ashtavakra Samhita* in this number. At our request he has also given word for word translation of the text, which is considered to be helpful to the majority of our readers. Readers will agree that *Ashtavakra Samhita* is indeed a powerful and yet simple treatise on Advaita Vedanta.

### To Our National Workers

There are at least three distinct stages in the realisation of an ideal. In the first stage, that is to say, in the beginning, the attachment to the ideal is more or less a sentimental one. The ideal fascinates us ; it seems the very pink of perfection. Its charms and attractions seem to paralyse our action. We do not consider much how we can fit it with our realities, or if it will be able to stand the contact of practical considerations. In the second stage, an understanding has to be made between the ideal and the real, and a tug of war takes place between them. The perfections of the ideal seem to vanish away one by one ; and it appears sometimes as if the ideal is no ideal at all. We get disgusted with ourselves at our former infatuation for it. We have been fools, so we think, to have ever adored it. The realities engross more and more of our attention now. We cannot overlook them in the way we did in the first stage. They seem often too much for us. The earth spreads all her treasures

before our eyes and tries to lure us away from the ideal. This is a stage in which the struggling soul passes through a great crisis. There is the fear of its losing its balance and being for ever lost in the morass of so-called facts.

Yet this crisis and confusion should not be considered a set-back. All progress towards an ideal has this as its middle stage. It cannot be avoided. A mere sentimental regard for the ideal is little good. The reckoning with the actualities of life and circumstances is an essential factor. Such a reckoning is a test of both the soul and the ideal. And this stage of reckoning cannot be reached unless we have made some progress towards the desired goal, and unless we have acquired vigour enough and have learnt to look facts squarely in the face.

In the third stage, the victory over the real and the actual has been won. The so-called realities have handed over their domains to the ideal which is now no longer the ideal but the Real in the true sense. The realities have become transfigured and reveal in their inmost being those charms and perfections which had bewitched us from a far in the first stage.

The various Congresses and Conferences which were held at Calcutta during the last part of December and the beginning of January remind us forcibly of the foregoing considerations. We do not intend to take stock of the actual results achieved. People will not be unjustified if they consider that the I. N. Congress has failed to give a clear lead to the country in the most momentous question that faces it,—Dominion Status *vs.* Independence. Already there are confusing versions of the main resolutions. Nor has the All Parties Convention succeeded in finding a final and true solution of the great problem of communalism. But we are not concerned here with these articulate results. We want to consider the condition of mind, that has found expression



through these deliberations. It is, we think, exactly identical with the second stage we have described above. The earlier charm of the ideal is lost on the national mind; it has reached the second state, that of reckoning with the actual; and for the moment the ideal is in danger of being swamped by the glimmers of the real. Even up to the N. C. O. Movement of Mahatma Gandhi, the early stage of sentimental idealism persisted. But now the nation, especially the younger section of it, is in grip with the actualities. It is comparing India and her age old ideals with other nations and their ways and aspirations, and is casting wistful looks around. The national mind seems bewildered. It is trying to do it knows not what. It is restless and without any pole star to guide it. Calls are coming to it from all sides and it knows not to which to respond. That is why we have heard so much of destructive talk in these assemblies, and so little of constructive.

Of course, we are not much disturbed by these manifestations. This fight and understanding with the actual is a necessary stage on the way. The national mind must pass through it. The present realism is undoubtedly an advance on the inactive idealism of the past. Much has to be done in all fields of life,—physical, political, economical, industrial, social, educational, cultural. A sturdy sense of realities is absolutely necessary to accomplish these arduous tasks well and quickly. It will not do for India to lag behind other nations in all respects, and merely gaze at the stars. An idealism that has not triumphed over realities and has merely evaded them, is certainly weakening. But, as we have pointed out before, this stage is also fraught with danger: the national mind may lose its balance and then there will be complete bankruptcy and ruin.

The safe and most fruitful course is therefore to keep our eye ever on the spiritual ideal of India, even while we

are waging the fiercest warfare with realities. It will not do if in our enthusiasm for India's material prosperity, we lose sight of the ideal. The only security, under the circumstances, lies in the rapid growth of a section which has reached the third stage of progress, the state of certitude and victory. We want now in the country a larger and larger number of persons to whom the ideal of India is no mere ideal but a living reality. Fortunately, even in the darkest days, India has not lacked such souls; and in the present times, we may confidently say that they are growing rapidly in number. There must necessarily be a large section of Indians who will be in the thick of the fight in the middle stage and turn faithless to the ideal. They will seek to monopolise the entire energy of the nation. This must be prevented. We therefore earnestly appeal to the best minds of the nation, to the pure, calm and strong ones, to listen to the divine call of Mother India, to her eternal message of spiritual regeneration. This call will make them not only meditative but also tremendously active in the true spirit of Karma Yoga.

A synthesis of the past and the present, and contemplation and action, is undoubtedly necessary. But are those who are now too much engrossed with the realities, fitted to conceive and realise the synthesis which even they feel is the destiny of the Indian nationhood? Mere activism is not enough. The interior must be calm 'like the flame in a windless place', only then would activism be fruitful. Without inner calmness, outer activism is a fitful fever, barren and destructive. Is this not the lesson that the Lord taught in the battle-field of Kurukshetra, and will young India in its present battle of life forget this supreme lesson? Do the youths of India spurn to listen to the wisdom of their forefathers?

One has said that the Yogis and ascetics should be shoved aside to make room for the ardent nationalists in the

building up of new India. They would be honoured, "but it is not their lead that we shall have to follow if we are to create a new India at once free, happy and great." But in the same breath it is said: "We must take our stand on our past. India has a culture of her own, which she must continue to develop along her own distinctive channels. . . . We must arrive at a synthesis between the past and the present, between our ancient culture and modern science. We are, of all people, most eminently fit for working out this synthesis. Some of our best thinkers and workers are already engaged in this important task." These statements seem self-contradictory to us. *Can anybody else than a real Yogi, can a mere intellectual or worker, ever conceive this synthesis? How can spirituality be synthesised except by a spiritual person? We must study the history of India a little more carefully. Did not every epoch of India have as its fountainhead of inspiration the life and teachings of a Yogi? When did India ever do without the guidance of Yogis? Evidently the speaker wanted to say that all kinds of Yogis cannot lead. That is true. The Yogis who would lead must be the embodiments of the spirit of the age, and must themselves come into the active field. The leading of such Yogis India must secure, or there is ship-wreck ahead.*

The speaker referred to above has also remarked that "if the pioneers and the leaders of the movement are on the whole on the right track, things will take their proper shape in due time." But does he not think that to be on the right track, the pioneers and leaders should be themselves intensely spiritual? We cannot leave the task of spiritual realisation to others, ourselves being merely active, and be yet on the right track. *The fact is, there is no other way for the national workers than to be intensely spiritual and intensely active at the same time. Let us not, in the name of activism, commit suicide.*

Intense activity and intense spirituality *can* be combined. But for that every-one of us must also devote a good part of our energy to spiritual contemplation every day. The time and energy thus spent will make our activity a thousand times more perfect and fruitful.

We invite our national workers, and especially, their leaders, to forge ahead to the third stage.

### **Brahmacharya, its Scientific Defence**

Is Brahmacharya detrimental to health and longevity? If it means celibacy or total sexual abstinence, voluntary and not forced, and for the sake of a moral or spiritual ideal, it is not. On the contrary, we have valid reasons to believe that it is the *surest* *means* of perfect health and longevity. We can quote chapter after chapter from our own scriptures as also from those of the Christians and Buddhists, which will lend support to our thesis. Why is Brahmacharya enjoined as a cardinal virtue in spiritual life, and what has it got to do with spiritual perfection? Spiritual perfection, as we understand it, is the unfoldment of the Divine in man. Before one gets it one must have some higher intuitional experiences. And to stand the shock of these experiences it is essential that the body, especially the brain and the nervous system, should be sufficiently strong and powerful. It is Brahmacharya alone that gives this physical fitness and strength. Look at some of the monks of Hrishikesh vowed to chastity and poverty from early boyhood. Look again at some of our religiously-inclined child widows. Why do they keep up a youthful appearance even in ripe old age and live an unusually long life? The reason is obvious.

But this is a sceptical age, and nobody is ready to accept anything unless it is scientifically proved. Every hypothesis to be true must be tested in the crucible of experiment. In a recent

issue of the *Yoga Mimamsa*, a quarterly journal recording scientific researches in psycho-physiology in its application to therapeutics, Srimat Kuvalayananda, the editor, writes an interesting article on Brahmacharya. He has dealt with the subject in all its physiological bearings and tried to refute scientifically the counter arguments of those Western scientists who consider celibacy as detrimental to health and longevity. We propose to give here an outline of the article in so far as it substantiates our thesis :

The physiological aspect of chastity and celibacy in relation to health and longevity bears on the sexual glands. Modern scientists are unanimous in declaring that healthy sexual glands ensure physical vigour and long life. Their arguments are as follows : (1) Historical records show that persons, whether male or female, enjoying good health till very late in life and living extraordinarily long, possess healthy and active sexual glands. So also people who have fire and courage in their eyes, people who defy dangers and rule circumstances, people who can mould their own destiny and that of others. (2) On the other hand, it has been found that castrated persons or persons with degenerated sexual glands show signs of premature old age. How to explain this relation between bodily vigour and healthy sexual glands? The medical science tells us that these glands functioning properly give out an internal secretion which stimulates and strengthens the organic tissues, specially the brain cells and the spinal cord. Now if it can be shown that Brahmacharya can keep these glands healthy and active the case for celibacy is naturally proved.

The agencies most deleterious to the sexual glands are, of course, the venereal diseases and excesses. But medical men disfavour total abstinence as equally dangerous, and they base their conclusion upon experiments and

clinical as well as anatomo-pathological observations. They thus argue out their case : (1) The sexual glands have an internal secretion which if generated in too large quantities may produce toxic effects on the system. This proposition is based on the experiments of Loisel who found that the extracts from such sexual glands if injected into other animals also have toxic effects. (2) The accumulation of this secretion may prove injurious to the glands themselves, sometimes even leading to their atrophy. Regaud and Mingazzini are responsible for this proposition. The former tried experiments on guinea-pigs and the latter on female animals. Both of them found serious modifications in the sexual glands of these animals after enforced abstinence. Besides, Kisch and Lorand observed several cases where enforced abstinence resulted in impotence and early disappearance of menstruation. (3) Lastly, celibacy may have injurious effects on the nervous system giving rise to hysteria and neurasthenia. The high percentage of nervous diseases in the case of old bachelors and spinsters proves this proposition.

So the verdict of science is that celibacy poisons the system, deteriorates the sexual glands so much as to lead to impotency, develops nervous symptoms and thus brings on premature senility and death. But married life led with moderation and restraint is the best way of keeping these glands healthy and thus ensuring physical vigour and long life, for there is in this life scope for avoiding unnecessary accumulation and the evil consequences thereof.

The writer examines this position and thus brings out its flaws step by step :

(1) The first two objections point to the dangers of the accumulation of the internal secretion. But if it could be shown that in Yoga there are healthier methods of avoiding this accumulation,

the point against celibacy is lost. And if it could be further proved that these methods avoid accumulation in a way calculated to help longevity, it would logically follow that celibacy prolongs life. Some of these healthier methods consist of Yogic exercises, some specific *Asanas*. It is to be noted that even in the case of ordinary persons a part of the secretion is taken up by the circulation through the lymphatic vessels and is used in building up the tissues at large. But the absorbing power of the lymphatic vessels and the secreting activity of the sexual glands are disproportionate. The latter secrete much more than the former can absorb, and this leads to the accumulation of the secretion. But there are clinical evidences that through the aforesaid exercises the lymphatic vessels can be made to work better and keep pace with the sexual glands. These exercises systematically gone through have cured many a suffering youngster. (2) And then even without these Yogic practices celibacy would not produce toxic effects, nor would it deteriorate the sexual glands if the celibate does not allow his nervous system to be wrecked by his brutish impulses. The toxic effects referred to in the objections are due to the impaired activity of the poison-eliminating organs which are

badly affected by strong venereal desires left unsatisfied. But now the question is whether these sexual impulses can be avoided in celibacy. The answer is in the negative if celibacy is enforced upon a person who is extremely sensual, for in that case he must suffer as the animals suffered when Loisel, Regaud and Mingazzini subjected them to experimentation. But the answer is in the affirmative if celibacy is voluntarily undertaken for a high ethical or religious ideal. The example of old bachelors and spinsters has this one lesson to teach.

Now we conclude with the writer by saying that celibacy is not at fault. It is only the mockery of it that is at fault. And modern scientific evidence is perfectly reliable in so far as enforced celibacy of brutish people or pseudo-Yogins, who do not want to restrain their sexual impulses nor have the strength to do so, is concerned. Such people must suffer. Real Yogins or spiritual persons who have seriously taken up celibacy as a means to their life's ideal and are ever loyal to it, cannot. They shall utilise their sexual energy to the best advantage in the formation of the finest brain, nerves, muscles and tissues and keep up their youthful vigour, freshness and joy all through the many years they will live.

## REVIEW

WOMEN IN HINDU LAW.—By K. T. Bhaskyam Aiyangar, B.A., B.L. S. Ganesan, Triplicane, Madras. 48 pp. Price Rs. 8.

The booklet contains a rapid historical survey of the rise and fall of the position accorded to women in Hindu Law. The writer's conclusions may be briefly stated in the following words of the writer himself: "We find that during the earliest or the Vedic ages women were treated almost on a par with men, while in the succeeding period of the *Sutras* the legal position of women is almost at its lowest ebb. The period of the early *Smritis* marks a revival

in favour of women's cause which improving in a large measure during the age of the later *Smritikaras* brought up women's position in Hindu Law almost to its original Vedic heights during the period of the *Nibandhakaras* or commentators. We find lastly that during the modern or British period of the administration of Hindu Law women's rights have been very largely cut down and that the legal position of women in Hindu Law to-day is as bad as it was about two thousand years ago, all the improvements effected during the intervening periods being whittled down by successive strokes of judicial decisions."

We congratulate the writer on the wealth of information he has collected within the short compass of 48 pages. He has given abundant scriptural references to substantiate his statements, though it is rather inconvenient to the ordinary reader that his foot-notes are given always in abbreviated forms and the translation of Sanskrit texts are not always full and literal.

The booklet is foreworded by Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyer, Kt., C.I.E., and is excellently got-up.

**SEVEN MONTHS WITH MAHATMA GANDHI, VOL. I.**—By Krishnadas. S. Ganesan, Triplicane, Madras, S. E. 449 pp. Price Rs. 3/8.

The writer has called his book "an inside view of the Non-co-operation Movement (1921-22)." To us the book appeals more as an inner view of the Mahatma's life and personality. We may at once admit that we have thoroughly enjoyed the perusal of the work.

The writer accidentally joined the Mahatma's entourage and very soon came to occupy an intimate position in relation to him. He toured with him through the South, in Assam and Bengal, and travelled with him wherever he went, always acting as a private secretary and personal attendant to him. This gave the writer a unique opportunity of observing the Mahatma in various moods and positions. The writer is very frank and sincere and is carefully observant. The account itself is quite reliable, because it is made out of letters and diary notes written during the time of his association with Mahatma Gandhi. We find in it how Mahatma Gandhi remained unmoved even amidst soul-shaking disasters, how sincerely he felt for the country, how true to his vows and resolutions he was amidst all trying circumstances, how unattached he was to the sentimental acclamations of the crowd, how tireless his mind was, though the body was tired to death, how he is indeed a Mahatma in every sense of the word. The book pictures him not only on platforms and in conferences, and as a public man, but also as a man of religion living his spiritual life in the peaceful solitude of his Ashrama. It also gives us entrancing glimpses of Mrs. Gandhi's life and character.

The book is worthy of careful perusal. We shall eagerly wait for the second volume.

**SWAPNALABDHA ADWAITABODHA OR SONGS OF ETERNITY ON ADWAITA.**

—By Nimiśhakavi Venkayya Garu. To be had of author, Modekurru, Rajole Taluq, East Godavari District, S. India. 177 pp.

The author has given in his book a description of many dreams which he had, in which he received many spiritual instructions and also initiation. The writer has also prefaced the account with a short autobiographical sketch. The writer states that he was much benefited spiritually by those dreams which he always found profoundly significant. In the appendix of his book he gives detailed scriptural confirmation of the dreams. It is not for us to say how far the writer's claim is genuine, but there is no doubt that dream experiences sometimes prove valuable.

**THE NEW CIVILISATION.** By Annie Besant, D.L., Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras, 110 pp.

The book reproduces the four lectures which Dr. Besant delivered at the Queen's Hall, London, in June, 1927. The subjects that she dealt with in those lectures were "The Crumbling of Civilisation," "The Religion of the New Civilisation," "Education in the New Civilisation," and "Economics of the New Civilisation." Dr. Besant's addresses are always thought-provoking and contain much with which most will agree. But of course there are views in them which will recommend themselves only to Theosophists. Thus, though it will be readily accepted that "service" is going to play a prominent part in the religion of the future, the theories of Ray and the co-operation between angels and men will leave many cold.

**THE BUDDHIST ANNUAL OF CEYLON,** Vol. III, No. 2, B.P. 2472, C.P. 1928. Edited by S. W. Wijayatilake, J. T. McKechnie and S. A. Wijayatilake. Printed and Published by W. E. Bastian and Co., Colombo, Ceylon. 12" x 9½", 85 pp. Price: Rs. 1/5.

The above Annual has been lying on our table for some time past. We regret we could not notice it earlier. The Annual has already acquired a high reputation in respect of its get-up, printing and reading matter. The present volume does not fall short of its usual high standard of excellence. It is profusely illustrated and contains as many

as fifty-nine beautiful pictures, some of which are full plates, and which will impress the readers with the glories of Buddhism. The contents of the Annual present various aspects of Buddhism and have been nicely treated by such articles as J. F. McKechnie on "The Buddha's Two Voices", A. D. Jayasundere on "The Psychology of Giving Dana", F. L. Woodward on "A Buddhist Legend in Europe", R. H. Brewster on "Immortality," G. K. W. Perera on "Winning Ceylon for Christ", the Hon. Dr. W. A. De Silva on "The Active Life of a Buddhist", Ernest L. Hoffmann on "The Fundamental Value of the Abhidhamma", Prof. A. Brodrick-Bullock on "Illusions and Disillusions", Mrs. L. Adams-Beck on "The Hatred of the Queen" and Prof. F. J. Mills, F.R.S., D. Sc., on "Reality". The perusal of the illuminating articles will greatly benefit the readers and give them a larger point of view in their study and appreciation of Buddhism. The Annual concludes with an appeal to all Buddhists and sympathisers for contributing towards the establishment of a Buddhist Pilgrims' Rest at Anuradhapura to be supplemented later by a free hospital, and records that considerable progress has already been made in the erection of the Rest.

**MAHARASTRA DIARY FOR 1929.** Published by Poona Anath Vidyarthi Griha, Poona City. Pocket and book size, cloth

binding. Price: As. -/6 and as -/12 respectively.

It is made of Swadeshi paper containing useful information on various subjects, each page devoted to a day with English and Marathi calendars. The profits will go to the above-mentioned Poor Students' Home.

**FORWARD ANNUAL, 1928.** Published at the "Forward" Press, 19, British Indian Street, Calcutta 17½" x 11¼". 80 pp.

It is not possible to give an adequate idea of the contents of the Annual within the compass of a brief notice. There are in it as many as 55 items of reading matter, dealing with various aspects—political, economical, cultural—of India, Asia, Europe and the World, many of them being contributed by writers of recognised merit. A special feature is the reports of interviews with such international celebrities as Ex-Kaiser Wilhelm II, Benito Mussolini, M. Venizelos and Marshall Foch, who have dwelt on the respective problems of their countries and the European and World's political situation.

The editor of "Forward" is to be congratulated on the excellence of the publication inasmuch as a perusal of its contents is bound to enlighten the reader on many outstanding problems of India and the world at the present day. The Annual is nicely got up and contains a large number of portraits of many Indian leaders of thought and action.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### **Birthday of Swami Vivekananda.**

The Anniversary of the Birthday of Swami Vivekananda falls this year on Friday, the first February.

### **Birthday of Sri Ramakrishna.**

The Anniversary of the Birthday of Sri Ramakrishna falls this year on Wednesday, the thirteen March.

### **Swami Nirmalananda at Calicut**

On the invitation of the Sri Ramakrishna Vedanta Society of Calicut, Swami Nirmalananda, President of the Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Bangalore, came to Calicut on the 21st Nov., and after a stay of four days, left for Ottappalam en route to Bangalore. The members of the Vedanta Society and many other gentlemen, availed themselves of the Swami's visit for getting spiritual en-

lightenment and kept him busy throughout his stay by interesting questions. The Swami's answers were clear, convincing and authoritative, and his interlocutors were quite satisfied. On the morning of the 23rd, the Swami visited Quilandy and laid the foundation of the new Ashrama building that is under construction there, and returned to Calicut the same evening.

On the morning of the 25th, the members of the Vedanta Society presented the Swami with an address before a large assembly, in the Palace Hall of the Zamorin's College, whose Principal, Mr. A. V. K. Krishna Menon, M.A., B.L., L.T., is the President of the Society. The address which was read by the President, spoke of the formation of the Society, of its aim and endeavour to study the Vedanta as expounded by the lives and teachings of Bhagavan Sri Rama-

krishna and the Swami Vivekananda, and invoked the blessings of the Swami for the fulfilment of its aims. The Swami made an eloquent and touching reply. He spoke of the necessity of the advent of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna to save not only India, but through her the whole world as well, from the baneful effects of its pursuit of soulless materialism, of the few helpless and despised young monastic disciples left by him to carry on his work, of how their leader, the great Swami Vivekananda, went to the west and conquered the world of thought and intellect there, of how the Hindus as a nation were raised in the esteem of the West and the Christian missionary influence in India paralysed as a result thereof, and of how the organisation of the Ramakrishna Order had been expanding year and after year from its small and unnoticed and perilous beginnings into a more and more powerful body, thereby indicating the will of God that was in and behind it.

The Swami then answered questions put by some of the audience and the assembly dispersed with a conviction that the Ramakrishna Order had a definite and unique place among the religious organisations of the world.

The Swami left the same afternoon leaving his rare blessings behind.

#### **Vedanta Centre, Providence, U. S. A.**

The following short article by F. A. Wilmot was published in *Providence Journal* and *Providence Bulletin*, two well-known dailies of Providence, U. S. A., where a Vedanta Centre was lately started by Swami Akhilananda :

Seven Swamis in the United States today represent the Vedanta Movement which was introduced into this country by the late Swami Vivekananda at the time of the World Parliament of Religions, in Chicago, in 1893.

The Vedanta Movement is not a counter missionary movement on the part of Hindus to Christian nations, but rather an emphasis on the universality of religion. The present

Swamis in the United States include : Bodhananda and Gnaneshwarananda of New York ; Paramananda of Boston and Los Angeles ; Madhavananda and Dayananda of San Francisco ; Prabhavananda of Portland, Ore., and Akhilananda, of this city, who is holding meetings in the Biltmore Hotel.

Swami Vivekananda propounded his famous doctrine that religion means realization, that is, that action is a path to worship, as well as rational argument, devotion and introspection. This theory is a spiritual counterpart to Prof. William James's "Pragmatism"—That a thing to be good must be good for something.

In a way Swami Vivekananda unearthed long hidden truths of the Vedas, which had been neglected thereby giving rise to the charge of passivity in Hinduism. It was a new application of an ancient religion to aggressive materialism, and possibly Vivekananda rediscovered the truth by a comparison with progressive Christianity.

Swami Akhilananda interprets his master, Swami Vivekananda's "Path of Action" in this wise :

"Religion or knowledge of God is not only for the devotional type of person, but for the active person as well. Action is transferred into worship. Different human beings come to a knowledge of God along diverse paths of action : such as medicine, education, relief work, etc. These are just as much a form of worship as the liturgical forms.

"Christianity manifests various paths of approach to God, as in the rational arguments of the Unitarian ; the right of the Y. M. C. A. in sport, recreation and housing devotion as in the Roman Catholic mass, and introspection, a less frequent form.

"The Hindu by the practice of Raja Yoga or meditation with rhythmic breathing has emphasized the possibilities of unlocking spiritual powers in this manner.

"All of these paths to worship are equally good, but different temperaments have to choose by which path they will approach God. All parts of religion, as well as all religions, are equally powerful to true devotees."

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“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।”

“Arise! Awake! And stop not till the Goal is reached.”

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## UNPUBLISHED LETTERS OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

VIII

(To an Englishman)

NEW YORK,  
2nd August, 1895.

. . . As soon as human beings perceive the glory of the Vedanta, all abracadabras fall off of themselves. This has been my uniform experience. Whenever mankind attains a higher vision, the lower vision disappears of itself. Multitude counts for nothing. A few heart-whole, sincere, and energetic men can do more in a year than a mob in a century. If there is heat in one body, then those others that come near it must catch it. This is the law. So success is ours, so long as we keep up the heat, the spirit of truth, sincerity, and love. My own life has been a very chequered one, but I have always found the eternal words verified: “Truth alone triumphs, not untruth. Through truth alone, lies the way to God.”

May the *Sat* in you be always your infallible guide! May He speedily attain to freedom, and help others to attain it!

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*“I will compare truth to a corrosive substance of infinite power. It burns its way in wherever it falls—in soft substance at once, hard granite slowly, but it must. . . . ‘Youth and beauty vanish, life and wealth vanish, name and fame vanish, even the mountains crumble into dust. Friendship and love vanish. Truth alone abides.’ God of Truth, be Thou alone my guide!”—Swami Vivekananda.*



# **SRI RAMAKRISHNA. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF HIS LIFE AND TEACHINGS**

**By SWAMI VIVEKANANDA**

IN a narrow society there is depth and intensity of spirituality. The narrow stream is very rapid. In a catholic society, along with the breadth of vision we find a proportionate loss in depth and intensity. But the life of Sri Ramakrishna upsets all records of history. It is a remarkable phenomenon that in Sri Ramakrishna there has been an assemblage of ideas deeper than the sea and vaster than the skies.

We must interpret the Vedas in the light of the experience of Sri Ramakrishna. Sankaracharya and all other commentators made the tremendous mistake to think that the whole of the Vedas spoke the same truth. Therefore they were guilty of torturing those of the apparently conflicting Vedic texts which go against their own doctrines, into the meaning of their particular schools. As, in the olden times, it was the Lord alone, the deliverer of the message of the Gita, who slightly harmonised these apparently conflicting statements, so, with a view to completely settle this dispute, immensely magnified in the process of time, He Himself has come as Sri Ramakrishna. Therefore no one can truly understand the Vedas and Vedanta, unless one studies them in the light of the utterances of Sri Ramakrishna, and surveys them through the medium of his life. It was Sri Ramakrishna who first exemplified in his life and taught that these scriptural statements which appear to the cursory view as contradictory, are meant for different grades of aspirants and are arranged in the order of evolution. The whole world will undoubtedly forget its fights and disputes and be united in a fraternal tie in religious and other matters as a consequence of these teachings.

Above all, we must always remember that all his teachings were for the good of the world. If any one has heard any injurious words from his lips, he should know that they were meant for that particular individual only; and though they might be harmful if followed by others, they were beneficial to that particular individual.

If there is anything which Sri Ramakrishna has urged us to give up as carefully as lust and wealth, it is the limiting of the infinitude of God by circumscribing it within narrow bounds. Whoever, therefore, will try to limit the infinite ideals of Sri Ramakrishna in that way, will go against him and be his enemy.

One of his own utterances is that those who have seen the chameleon only once, know only one colour of the animal, but those who have lived under the tree, know all the colours that it puts on. For this reason, no saying of Sri Ramakrishna can be accepted as authentic, unless it is verified by those who constantly lived with him and whom he brought up to fulfil his life's mission.

Such a unique personality, such a synthesis of the utmost of Jnana, Yoga, Bhakti and Karma, has never before appeared among mankind. The life of Sri Ramakrishna proves that the greatest breadth, the highest catholicity and the utmost intensity can exist side by side in the same individual, and that society also can be constructed like that, for society is nothing but an aggregate of individuals.

He is the true disciple and follower of Sri Ramakrishna, whose character is perfect and all-sided like his. The formation of such a perfect character is the ideal of this age, and every one should strive for that alone.

# THE DREAM OF A NEW PERFECTION

By THE EDITOR

## I

THE preceding little article, that on Sri Ramakrishna by Swami Vivekananda, contains a very significant phrase. Apropos of the teaching of the Master on the harmony of apparently conflicting creeds and philosophies, the Swami says: "The whole world will undoubtedly forget its fights and disputes and be united in a fraternal tie in religious *and other matters* as a consequence of this teaching." (Italics are ours.) According to the Swami, the doctrine of the harmony of religions is calculated not merely to unify religions proper, but also other aspects of life. And the Swami concludes with this important paragraph: "He is the true disciple and follower of Sri Ramakrishna, whose character is perfect and all-sided like his. *The formation of such a perfect character is the ideal of this age, and every one should strive for that alone.*" (Italics are ours.)

Writing on the same subject in February, 1928, we expressed ourselves thus: "The doctrine of religious harmony teaches that other creeds than what one professes are also as good means of God-realisation as one's own, and that therefore one should not be fanatically disposed towards them but should on the other hand respect them. Suppose one does not follow this teaching; will that obstruct one's personal Self-realisation? No, for we know that there have been many Christians of God-realisation, even though they looked upon us as deluded heathens. Fanaticism may not be always harmful to one's spiritual progress. But it warps the intellect and has bad social reactions. It breeds social disharmony and misunderstanding. So this teaching of religious harmony is calculated *mainly*

to bring about social, national and international unity and harmony."

In fact in this juncture of the history of the human race, nothing is more needed than peace and harmony. And we say emphatically that Sri Ramakrishna's teaching on the harmony of religions is alone capable of bringing about that harmony.

## II

What are the disharmonies and conflicts of the present age due to? Two reasons appear to us as fundamental. One is external. It is the sudden coming together of the different races of mankind with their divergent outlooks and cultures. The modern methods of quick transportation have made the world very small, and these having been devised wholly by the Western races, the Westerners have filled the earth with their aggressive presence and their non-assimilative culture. Conflict has thus been inevitable. The Westerners were neither willing nor able to understand Oriental cultures. And as regards the Oriental races, they were, in spite of their deep intuition and capacity for assimilation, too unfortunate politically and economically to quickly produce the desired harmony between themselves and the West. The entrance of the West into the life of the East was too sudden. The Westerners did not approach us in a noble spirit,—in the name of culture and religion. They came to rob us of our material wealth. This necessarily accentuated the difference. We now and then hear our Western friends complain that the East does not appreciate the greatness of the West. They assure us that the West also has cultural greatness,—the West is not all

material. The East cannot be blamed for this misunderstanding. The history of the West in Asia, Africa, Australia and America has left too ugly an impression on our mind to be easily removed. Even now the West is not showing a more generous spirit. The testimony of the last four hundred years has been too unfavourable for the West. Even when the West has come to the East in the name of religion, education or service, its activities have not been always above suspicion;—they have more often than not proved demoralising. And thus misunderstanding has grown greater and bitterer with the passing of days.

The second reason is internal. Why has the West proved so deadly to the life of the East? The reason is a pathetic spiritual bankruptcy of the Western mind. When we consider the spiritual poverty and suffering the West, even we who have so much to complain against it, feel our heart melt with sympathy, even as a brother dotes in the agony of love on his spiritually less fortunate brother. Have we not often seen the bright promise of early years being suddenly blasted and throwing the confused soul into the dark valley of dissipation and self-destruction? The sight cannot but move one to tears. Who has then the heart to blame the unfortunate soul? For it there must be only silent prayers and loving ministrations. We are egoistic enough to feel often the same way towards the West. It does not know what it is doing. Spiritually, it is groping in the dark. Aimless it is rushing headlong towards self-destruction. Swami Vivekananda once remarked that life in the West was all laughter and merriment on the surface, but a deep wail of despair below. When Christianity lost its hold on the Western mind, it threw it into the very abyss of materialism. There was no other spiritual consolation left for it. Time and again the West has sought to secure a standing ground on new-fangled ideas, but they have invariably given way. Rationalism, the

doctrine of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity of the French Revolution, Atheism, Positivism, Theosophy, Agnosticism, Spiritualism, Occultism, Christian Science, Anthroposophy, New Thought, Humanism, none have availed much. The Western mind is in conflict with itself. Its materialism is fighting its innate spirituality. Its science is clashing against its faith. Its communalism is destroying its domestic life. Its feverish activity is grating on its inner silence and peace.

The East also has been subject to almost a similar conflict. It is true that the East is sure of its spirituality. But it is finding it hard to accommodate it with its material needs. It feels that in order to live, it must rise equal to the occasion;—it must stand unflinchingly the material aggressions of the West and defeat them. Yet how to harmonise the spiritual and the material is a sore problem.

These two causes have given rise to infinite complications. In all spheres of life, there are clashes and conflicts, internal and external. What is that balm that will resolve all these conflicts and bring peace unto the suffering soul of man? If we closely analyse the situation both in the East and in the West, we shall find that the fundamental need is the spiritualisation of life. The West requires its hydra-headed activity and aspiration to be conceived spiritually and realised as expressions of the one basic Divinity. Only in such a conception and realisation can the West find sure grounds to stand on and lasting solace in its parched up soul. Its passion for liberty, power, individualism, expansion and organisation have all to be spiritualised. Spiritualised, these will not only be beneficial to mankind but will also lead the Westerners to the very heart of God; but developed along the normal plane, they will spell sure disaster to themselves and the world. Such spiritualisation, however, means a complete change of the present outlook on life. The West must take an altogether new

view-point which need not, however, be antagonistic to its inmost aspirations, but should be their fulfilment and transformation. In the East the spiritualisation would consist in learning a wider conception of spirituality, in applying spirituality to also the so-called secular concerns of life, in organising all activities on the spiritual basis and in uniting divergent individuals, races, cultures and nations into one grand synthesis.

### III

It must be admitted that the task of spiritualisation, as formulated here, is a stupendous one. Where is the power to bring about such world-wide revolutions in the mind of men? Yet, if we study the programme more intimately, we shall find that in the last analysis it means only a few items. All changes are ultimately individual. What are the changes that should be brought about in the individual in order to produce those world-wide consequences? As they appear to us, they are but the following: (1) Men must learn to look upon themselves as Spirit, as Atman. (2) They must look upon each life, each being as a unique manifestation and unfolding of the inherent Divine. It is our conviction that if more and more persons all over the world begin to accept and practise these two truths, all the apparently baffling problems of the present age, individual and collective, will lose their grimness and gradually vanish into nothingness.

Let us take the case of the domestic problems of the West. Why is there so much misery and failure in the Western family life to-day? There are no doubt economic and political reasons. But these, to our mind, are not enough to account for the disintegration of the family. It would be a mistake, as Sister Nivedita observes, to attribute the regrettable tendency towards disintegration of the family, which we are undeniably witnessing in the West to-day, to any ardour in the pursuit of civic

ideals. High moral aims are almost always mutually coherent. Weakening of family ties will not go hand in hand, in a modern community, with growth of civic integrity. Both the progressive idea of the *civitas*, and the conservative idea of the family, are apt to suffer at once from that assumption of the right to enjoyment which is so characteristic of the West.

To us the root cause of the domestic disintegration seems to be that the Western men and women have forgotten the true purpose of their life, which is spiritual self-realisation. They have forgotten to look upon themselves as spirit. The modern West boasts that its men and women are free individuals. It means that they look upon one another as mind. But here exactly lies the danger. To look upon a man or woman as mind is to ascribe to him or her an individuality which is inviolable, unassimilable and rigid. Mental individuality is self-centred. Its direction is towards itself rather than from itself. It is extremely sensitive about its peculiarities and seeks to employ everything to its own service. It is of a grasping nature and yields nothing. Unity, mutual love and forbearance thus become impossible. In an ideal world "individuals" can no doubt live amicably. But in the work-a-day world, conflict, bitter conflict is inevitable if we emphasise our individualities. The sacrifice of individuality is urgently necessary for a happy domestic life. Yet, it cannot be denied that to lose individuality is to be reduced to nothing. No prospect can be more disastrous. The only way out of this dilemma is to conceive our individuality in a spiritual sense, to think of and seek to realise oneself as spirit and not as mind or an intellectual being. The Western conception of individuality is pre-eminently mental, it is not spiritual. The moment, however, the husband and wife will learn to look upon themselves and each other as spirit, they will cease to emphasise their mental peculiarities. They will easily sacrifice their idio-

syncretasies and live on the principle of love and self-sacrifice. It is no longer the individual differences, but the underlying unity that they will dwell on. Family life will become happier. Pleasure-seeking and sensation-mongering are the very bane of domestic felicity. Without the spiritual outlook pleasure-seeking cannot be got rid of. Without it, the daily routine of the average family life must appear as dull and uninteresting. But spirituality endows even the most drab things with a celestial light and perennial interest. Mutual tolerance, mutual love and respect, unending self-sacrifice, intense joy, deep feeling, deep purposiveness, mental exaltation, contentment, all these foundation virtues of domestic life can come only from a conception of oneself as spirit, from nothing else.

Take again the case of the exploitation of the weaker races by the races of the West. That tremendous energy which the Western men and women feel within themselves, must have an outlet. If you cannot employ your energies on the spiritual plane, you cannot but do havoc on the material and mental planes. That is exactly what the West is doing. Its energies must be consumed by the fire of spiritual self-realisation. Only then will it cease to be aggressive. Says Bertrand Russel: "The keynote of this new civilisation, which has sprung up, in the first instance, in the West, . . . is power and the sense of power, power primarily over inanimate nature but ultimately, though that aspect is not yet fully developed, also over living things and over the minds and bodies of human beings." Here is a clear statement of both the danger and the hope of the Western civilisation. Power is dangerous, if it is not properly employed and directed, like a sharp weapon in the hands of a child. But if it is used in controlling the mind and the body *with a spiritual end in view*, it is our very salvation. The sense of freedom and power in which the West is revelling has to be metamorphosed into spiritual

freedom and power. But what concept other than the Vedantic conception of the Spirit, can ever satisfy and transform the dynamic individualism of the West? Here, in the Vedantic conception of the Atman, is the strong lure for the aggressive individualism of the West to forsake the material fields of self-aggrandisement and seek unlimited scope in the spiritual field.

In this spiritualisation of individuality, again, lies the solution of the present labour-capital warfare and demoniac militarism. For a spiritual being has quite other things to fight for than the riches of the world. In fact, our conception of our own self is the pivot of our universe. The world of values has its centre in our own self-consciousness. Any change in the latter means a corresponding change in the former. It is a pet idea of some Western thinkers that the moral and spiritual values are dependent on the economic and social conditions of people. This is only apparently true. The *form* of morality may change with the change of external conditions. Spirituality may seek different expressions in different ages. But morality in its essence is permanent, and the spirit is eternal, immutable, lord of all things and affected by none. If to-day we are losing faith in God, soul and religion, it is neither science nor industrialism that is to blame, but our inner confusion, ignorance, tendency to drift, and lack of boldness and willingness to understand the secrets of the superconscious.

But the spiritualisation of life's values is not by itself enough to bring peace to mankind. Individuals may find peace through it. But peace between man and man, race and race, and nation and nation will be far off, if we do not seek to conceive spiritual life in a sane, unbiased, rational and scientific spirit, and if we do not look upon all men, races and nations as equally Divine and unique in their revelations as ourselves. We have to feel that every man is an

unfolding of the Divine, that each soul holds within it a secret being of God, which it is trying to realise and manifest. When we have learnt to thus look upon all men and things, they will appear to us to be as sacred and adorable as the very being of God and as worthy of our earnest solicitude and devoted service. Whatever helps that unfoldment will seem spiritual and worshipful. No institutions of men, no noble aspiration and enterprise, therefore, will seem unworthy of our sincere respect. We shall not destroy anything, we shall give it a higher meaning and fulfil it. We shall develop universal sympathy. Intuitively we shall come to feel the outlooks of all we come across and instinctively we shall sympathise with them and help them. Thus will the East and the West solve their respective problems. The West will give to its activities and aspirations a spiritual impetus and spiritual meaning, and the East will harmonise the necessary secular activities with its spiritual ideals. For nothing now is secular, everything pertaining to man is enlightened by the light Divine.

It must be clear that such an attitude towards men and nations is possible only when the conception of the Self and religion is broad and scientific enough. It presupposes that we are no longer dogmatic or credal in our view of truth and reality. We have learnt to look upon truth as a jewel with innumerable facets and upon ourselves as that jewel. We have become as broad as the sky and as deep as the ocean. Our life must represent this grand synthesis in the fullest degree. Only then shall we be fit to inhabit that world in which universal peace and brotherhood is a reality and in which all the aspirations and activities of life are harmonised into a shining whole.

#### IV

All that we have said above about synthesis and the two principles underlying it, were preached by Sri Rama-

krishna in his great teaching on the harmony of religions. For the harmony of religions is nothing but what we have described above. The usual interpretation of this doctrine scarcely touches its heart. The reality of this teaching lies in the mentality, outlook and attitude implied by it. That attitude is not concerned with religion (in the narrow sense) only, but with all that pertains to man. If the entire life is to be harmonised on the broad basis of spiritual consciousness, we must begin with those which are primarily and expressly concerned with spirituality, that is to say, with religions. When they have been harmonised, they will at once assume a new value and authority, and consequently impel us to conceive a spiritual view of life, and the other aspects of life will automatically take their legitimate places in the scheme of the grand synthesis. That is why the work of the universal harmony had to be enunciated to begin with as the harmony of *religions*, and we notice several strata of meaning in this teaching. We may by the way note that one of the distinctive characteristics of all great teachings is that they lend themselves to various shades of interpretation, one gradually leading to another. We begin with the obvious. But as we dwell on it, it yields us a deeper significance which in its turn leads us to a still deeper meaning. Sri Ramakrishna's teaching on the harmony of religions is no exception.

This teaching is generally considered to indicate that while one should follow one's own creed, one should not antagonise the creeds of others, but must consider them to be as efficacious means of God-realisation as one's own. This is the obvious, superficial meaning. This itself, however, if accepted and practised, will do great good to humanity which is now torn into factions by warring creeds. Sri Ramakrishna generally used to expound this aspect of his teaching by the following example. As one and the same material, namely water, is called by different names by

different peoples, one calling it *water*, another *vâri*, a third *aqua*, and a fourth *pâni*, so the one *Satchidânanda* is invoked by some as God, by some as Allah, by some as Hari and by others as Brahman. Different creeds, he said, are but different paths to reach the one God. Various and different are the ways that lead to the temple of Mother Kali at Kalighat (near Calcutta). Similarly, various are the ways that lead to the house of the Lord. According to this teaching, each is to follow his own particular path and to look with respect upon the paths of others. But this is not enough.

A deeper meaning, however, is indicated by the following parable of the Master. Two persons were hotly disputing as to the colour of a chameleon. One said: "The chameleon on that palm tree is of a beautiful red colour." The other contradicting him said: "You are mistaken; the chameleon is not red, it is blue." Unable to settle the matter by arguments, they both went to a person who always lived under that tree and had watched the chameleon in different conditions. One of them said to him: "Sir, is not the chameleon that lives in this tree, of a red colour?" He replied: "Yes." The other disputant said: "What do you say? How is it? It is not red, it is blue." That person again humbly replied: "Yes." The person knew that the chameleon is an animal that constantly changes its colours. Thus it was that he said "Yes" to both of them. The *Satchidânanda* likewise has various forms. The devotee who has seen God in only one aspect knows Him in that aspect only. He who has seen Him in all His manifold aspects is alone in a position to say: "All these forms are of the one God, and God is multi-form." He is formless and with form, and many are His forms which no one knows.

Here we clearly find that Sri Ramakrishna is preaching a more real and intimate kind of religious harmony. One is not to be content with realising

God in one form or aspect only, one must know him in multiform aspects. This, in fact, is true harmony of religions. Until we have learnt to feel for and appreciate all the different manifestations of God in an equal manner, our harmony will be merely intellectual assent and toleration, not realisation. It will be at best superficial. It will not effect that broadening of the mind, heart and sympathies, which is absolutely necessary for the realisation of the many-phased Divine and for the true understanding of men and nations, on which the peace of the world essentially depends. The second example of Sri Ramakrishna indicates the ideal after which we should aspire.

But a yet deeper enunciation of the doctrine is available, in our opinion, in another example of the Master. There was a dyer who had only one tub of colour. When a customer came to him, he would ask him what colour he wanted to dye his cloth with. When he would be told the colour wanted, he would dip the cloth in the tub and lo, the required colour was there. Thus from the same tub he would produce all different colours according to requests. At last there came a man who did not want any colour particularly. He said: "I want that colour with which you have dyed your own garments." This is a very profound saying of the Master, and it, in our opinion, goes to the root of the matter. The dyer is God himself. He reveals himself to men as they want to see him. Each but sees one aspect of him. But the wiser man is he who says to the Lord that he wants to know him as he knows himself to be, that is to say, in all his infinite aspects. A more sublime ideal, spiritual or secular, no man has ever conceived. We do not follow one creed or even several creeds. We are not content with the revelation of one or even several aspects of God. We want to know and see him as he knows himself to be. We want to perceive him in his infinite entirety. This

is true harmony of religions. When one has realised this harmony, one becomes one with the Divine, and all beings become knit together in the effulgent thread of his love. He feels, even as God feels, the whole universe as his very being. The heart-beats of the universe become his own heart-beats, and nothing is separate from him. For him the difference between the secular and the spiritual has vanished for ever. He has no special outlook of his own. He can instinctively identify himself with every man and thing. He can intuitively enter into the soul of every being. The greatest real harmony is every moment patent before us,—the universe. The universe with its infinite warring elements is yet imbued with an inalienable unity. How is the universe held together? What is the secret of this harmony? The mind of God. A true harmoniser also must become like God. His mind must become one with the mind of God. This is true harmony of religions.

We must not forget to mention in this connection another significant teaching of the Master. He would strictly enjoin upon every one to respect the *bhava* of oneself and others. *Bhava* is a very significant word. It means the outlook of life, the mental attitude towards all things and towards God, the particular reading of the universe, the spiritual mood or the state of ecstasy. It means the particular mould of our mind, spiritual and otherwise. Every man has his *bhava*. The full growth of it is the Divine realisation. This *bhava* should on no account be interfered with. Every man must develop his *bhava* in his own way. Not only should we be careful to respect and help the growth of the *bhava* of others, but we must also maintain our own intact. This teaching is essentially related to that on the harmony of religions. What a universal understanding and sympathy does not this indicate!

How to practise and realise this harmony? The following utterance of Swami Vivekananda may throw some light: "Nisthā (devotion to one Ideal) is the beginning of realisation. 'Take the honey out of all flowers: sit and be friendly with all, pay reverence to all, say to all, 'Yes, brother, Yes, brother,' but keep firm in your own way.' A higher stage is actually to take the position of the other. If I am all, why can I not really and actively sympathise with my brother and see with his eyes? While I am weak, I must stick to one course (Nisthā), but when I am strong, I can feel with every other and perfectly sympathise with his ideas. The old idea was, 'Develop one idea at the expense of the rest.' The modern way is 'harmonious development.' A third way is to 'develop the mind and control it,' then put it where you will; the result will come quickly. This is developing yourself in the truest way. Learn concentration and use it in any direction. Thus you lose nothing. He who gets the whole must have the parts too." According to the Swami, the control of the mind and an Advaita outlook will succeed in producing the mentality of harmony. We are not to practise each religion separately in order to realise the harmony of religions. That is manifestly impossible for the common man. Only one has done it and that is Sri Ramakrishna. This path, therefore, is practically blocked for us. Swamiji's prescription is undoubtedly suit many. But is there not an easier course still? We believe there is. It is the meditation on the personality of Sri Ramakrishna, —constantly dwelling on him and the absorption of the mind in him.

The reasons of our belief are self-evident. For he has been the only man in the history of the world to realise universal harmony in its truest sense. He is the Great Exemplar. If we want a concrete, tangible form of harmony,



we have to go to him. It is indeed extremely difficult, if not impossible, for the ordinary man to conceive an ideal without its tangible form before him. Through form we reach the idea. So if we contemplate on Sri Ramakrishna we shall surely succeed in understanding what harmony really is. But that is not all. Most persons, however intensely they may represent a particular idea, contain also many other ideas of various natures. If we dwell on their life, there is the danger of our mind being infected with those unwanted elements. The meditation on only those persons can be beneficial, who are not really *persons* as we understand them, but embodiments of Divine ideas. They are called *Avatāras*. If we pursue their personality, we find it ultimately blending into the Transcendental. Such a one was Sri Ramakrishna. He had no being of his own. His all were consumed in the fire of Divinity; and his form encased only the Divine. To think of him is to think of God. Whereas this is true of all who have been looked upon as Divine Incarnations, the case of Sri Ramakrishna is somewhat different and unique. Other Incarnations represented only one or several aspects of God. They reflected God in those aspects only. But Sri Ramakrishna's whole life demonstrated that God manifested through him in all aspects hitherto known to men, and in what other

aspects who can tell? In him God was present in his infiniteness. That is why if we meditate on him, and through this meditation identify ourselves with the Divinity as was manifested in his life, we shall also realise the harmony that Sri Ramakrishna realised. He is the mould in which we may cast our mind and make it like his. This is the sovereign means.

This ideal of harmony is not merely for the spiritualisation of worldly activities, for the national and international unity, or for the solution of the problems of the East and the West. While it is true that without this spirit of spiritual harmony world peace and unity is impossible, its ultimate aim is God-realisation, - the realisation of God *in all his infinite aspects*. The best of us will be able to reach the summit. But a vast majority will be actuated by the spirit of harmony to feel and act better in the worldly life, in domestic, social, national and international affairs. The river flows intently to the sea. But it makes the countries it passes through glad with foliage, flowers and fruits. We strive after the highest. But on our way to the goal and even when we fail to reach it, we do great good to society and humanity by our enlightened and purified thought and action. The sun shines so high in the sky, yet its warmth opens the heart of the meanest flower in the world down below.

## NOTES OF CONVERSATIONS WITH SWAMI TURIYANANDA

1ST JULY.

Swami T: "Whenever Swamiji (Vivekananda) said 'I', he did it in identity with the all-comprehensive 'I'. When we say 'I', we identify it with the body, the senses and the mind. Hence we have to say 'servant I', 'devotee I.' Swamiji would never identify his 'I' with any adjunct of the Self,—he would one himself with

Brahman and go beyond body, mind and *buddhi*. This was his central and normal mood, and in that he used to pass the greatest part of his time. But such a mood does not come to us. We are living separate from Him. Hence we have to say 'Thou' and 'Thine' in reference to God."

Disciple: "In order to realise the cosmic 'I', should those who are

dualistic in spiritual practice, study books on Advaita?"

*Swami T:* "The Master used to say: 'Do whatever you like after having tied the knowledge of Advaita in the corner of your cloth.' The true devotees always say 'Thou' 'Thine', that is to say, 'O Lord, Thou art everything and everything is 'Thine.' Where does this differ from Advaita? But if a devotee says 'I' and 'mine' and feels himself separate from and independent of Him, it is an extremely harmful dualism. Such a devotee is greatly deluded. The Master would often repeat 'Not I, not I', 'Thou, 'Thou', 'I am 'Thy servant, I am Thy servant'. A devotee must completely renounce all 'I' and 'mine'. How often Ramprasad engaged in loving quarrel with the Divine Mother and coaxed and cajoled Her! Such an intense and condensed spiritual mood must be realised, - like water condensed into ice. Only then can we have a vision of His Divine forms. Gopaler Ma<sup>\*</sup> saw Gopala following her gathering fire-wood, and Sri Ramakrishna saw Ramlala going about with him. It is the intensity of spiritual feeling that counts. Whether you believe in His form or formlessness it does not matter. 'O lotus, what kind of love is thine? Thou givest only the smile of thy face to the sun thy husband. But thy honey thou yieldest to the bee!' If one considers God to be all in all, how can one find joy in worldly things?"

*Disciple:* "How can one get rid of attachment, aversion and such other evil tendencies?"

*Swami T:* "But why should you allow them to be? You cannot chastise others. Chastise yourself."

3RD JULY.

*Swami T:* "Eating, sleeping, fear and sexual intercourse, these are

common features of both animal and man. The speciality of man is that he has knowledge and can distinguish right from wrong. The lower a man is, the greater is his joy in sense-objects. The higher he is, the greater is his pleasure in knowledge, - a subtle joy which low natures cannot appreciate. See how they are spending their days in drinking, hunting and running after women, - just like beasts. What use having been born a man, if we do not refine and elevate our faculties? Those who have an elevated mind can never stoop to these things.

"You want to go to the West? What is the use of making the mind out-going? Absorb yourself in meditation and be lost in Him. It would be excellent if you could spend five years in exclusive meditation of the Master. Then the West and here would become one.

"I do not care a rap for history or other things.—God is everything.' What a beautiful saying! . . . The stick of ego is lying on the waters of Satchidananda. This is making the waters appear as divided. Desires create the ego. Desires keep us apart from God. But one day we shall have to eradicate all desires and call on Him. What if the body goes while calling Him?"

"However great a man may be, whatever great deed he may be doing, some day he will have to be desireless. After that, of course, he may work again through the will of God. But if you work at the command of a *Mahāpurusha*, a man of realisation, to whom you have surrendered your all and who seeks your good, work will not tighten your bondage; on the other hand, it will break it. Always pray to Him that you may not forget Him. Pray: 'Do not give me such work to do, as will make me forget Thee, and

\* One of the chief lady disciples of Sri Ramakrishna. She used to have constant vision of Gopala (Child Krishna).

† Sri Ramakrishna worshipped Ramlala or Child Rama for some time. At that time used to see Him constantly. (See *Life of Sri Ramakrishna*).

wherever Thou keepest me, may I ever remember Thee !'

"But do not say to Him : 'Give me this', 'Do not give me that'. It will be an interested prayer. When you want to do one thing and do not want to do another, you allow your ego to come in. Some there are, who are afraid of work and try to avoid it. That makes their bondage and selfishness lasting. Pray to Him for *Bhakti*. But be ever ready to obey His commands. Pray : 'May I keep Thee in mind under all conditions ! May I never fall into any other company than that of Thy devotees !' "

4TH JULY.

*Swami T* : "We must know once for all that everything happens at His will. Many clever persons were born in this world. But what was their end ? Everything comes about and is destroyed at His will. This organisation of ours,—will this last for ever ? No, this also will one day be degraded and then the Lord will have to incarnate again.

"A Brahman is a spiritual beggar. He must not provide even for two days. He must be completely absorbed in God.

"The Master used to think meanly of those who lived with women. He used to say that they had no substance in them . . .

"Those who have not good reasoning powers, become easily biased towards one side. Swamiji had equally the power to explain and to feel. He

knew the defects of people and yet forgave them."

*Disciple* : "Cannot the mind remain alert and awake of itself ?"

*Swami T* : "But can that state come automatically ? You must practice first. Try consciously to correct yourself first, then you will find that your mind has become its own monitor. People want to reach that state at once. The pure portion in you is God Himself. The impure portion is yourself. When you say 'I' you really mean that impure portion. The more you will think of Him, the more He will grow in you, and at last the impure portion will vanish completely.

"There are some who are extremely reserved. They raise high walls around them and do not allow any one to see their inside. This is very bad. One cannot realise God without being frank and sincere."

7TH JULY.

*Swami T* : "The more you will free yourself of egoism and become His instrument, the more you will realise peace. The more you will feel that God is the only doer, not you, the more your heart will fill with peace."

9TH JULY.

*Swami T* : "We also at first thought *Nirvāna* to be the highest state of realisation. How often the Master rebuked us for this ! He said that it was a mean conception. I would be amazed to hear him call *Nirvāna* a mean conception."

## SPIRITUAL IMPLICATIONS OF MAYAVADA.

BY DR. MAHENDRANATH SIRCAR, M.A., PH.D.

### TRUTH AND VALUE

Truth and value are the fundamental concepts in philosophy. Philosophers are at variance in fixing their primariness and derivativeness. Rationalists are anxious to derive value from truth,

pragmatists, truth from value. Truth is the soul of science and philosophy, value, of morality and religion. In the history of philosophy the allegiance has not been made equally to the both, and ever since the time of Plato the

one or the other has been accentuated in importance. Kant makes the distinction clear and definite and lays more stress upon value and the primacy of will, and since Kant, philosophy has been eloquent about value concept. In the vitalistic, romantic, and pragmatic movement, a well-defined start has been given to religion which seeks no longer confirmation from reason but from supersensuous revelations of life.

Value concept has revised the test of truth, truth is no longer sought in correspondence of assertions and facts or coherence of assertions themselves. It is sought in intuitions and effects of life. There are intuitions of practical reason whereupon theoretic reason is not competent enough to pronounce a judgment, and their truth or falsity is necessarily outside the province of theoretic reason and the conditions of its judgment.

This divergence between truth and value has been minimised by Prof. Alexander in his conception of Tertiary qualities. He regards truth, beauty and value as fundamentally of a similar nature rising out in experience through appreciation or valuation—"from apprehending through appreciation a corresponding character in the object of our appreciation."

Appreciation puts the thing in a peculiar relation to the subject, without this relation appreciation has no meaning. Whatever may be the form of appreciation, it always demands certain adjustment of the object to the subject. The object by itself has no meaning, unless it is presented to the subject. By itself it is an existence without meaning, its appreciation or meaning is acquired in relation to a subject or a community of subjects. Royce also hints at this when he maintains that knowledge is essentially finding meaning. Meaning or appreciation gives truth or falsity, ugliness or beauty of a thing; and truth or falsity, beauty or ugliness are not to be regarded, according to Prof. Alexander, as quality of

things, for things are neither true nor false in themselves—their truth or falsity rises in relations.

#### RELATIONS OF TRUTH AND RELATIONS OF VALUE

A truth-judgment is different from the assertion of "Is". "Is" expresses a fact, an existence, but does not make a judgment. It is a sensation or an affection or pure existence without a definite content or meaning. A truth-judgment is an assertion of meaning. It 'dissects to unite'.

A value-judgment presupposes this meaning but implies something more. It puts a value upon meaning which draws in the subject more prominently in it. This prominence of the subject distinguishes a truth-judgment from a value-judgment. The subject is implied in truth-judgment, but the balance between the subject and the object is evenly maintained. The truth-judgment is expressive of relation between subject and object, and the object is more prominent in the truth-judgment than in the value-judgment, for, though the meaning always demands a reference to the subject, still in the judgment the subject does not feel the object in personal touch. This subjective or personal touch becomes more prominent in value-judgment. There the self is more prominent, for it is anxious to see not only the meaning of the object in an order of relations but its value in the order. The moment the meaning has acquired this reference to the self, it has a new light. A new aspect is presented. The meaning is no longer confined to the object and its objective relations, but becomes directly related to the subject itself. This impress of the subjective self puts the thing in a new colour, as that which is sought to be enjoyed or gratified. Meaning and value are therefore not identical. That which has value has necessarily a meaning. But that which has a meaning has not always a value. Their universes are not identical. A

dream has a meaning, but no value, a false appearance has a meaning, but no value. Value is, therefore, a category different from meaning, though both imply a subject-object reference and relation. The pragmatic test of truth is, therefore, short-sighted in so far as it cannot include many references which have no value but have an appearance or meaning. To seek, therefore, truth in value would amount to forcibly limiting its scope and exclude many objects that have no claim to value though they have every claim to truth.

Similarly the identification of truth with meaning is necessarily restricting the sense of truth, for, meaning is always in reference to the self and gives a subjective touch to truth. Meaning is, no doubt, implied in judgment. A judgment puts the object in a certain relation to the self and cannot have the detached vision of the object. Therefore, when the object makes an impression the mind becomes restive to put it in a category. And understanding gives the meaning. But it is not possible to avoid the subjective reference of meaning. It may be well said that the subjective reference does not stand in the way of correct apprehension or estimate of the object, but still it cannot be doubted that the judgment introduces an element which is entirely subjective, and its estimate must be subject to conditions which at least do not allow to make the presentation of the thing as it is.

This limitation of human judgment makes the sense of truth as meaning certainly restricted. The Advaita Vedanta sees this difficulty and therefore maintains that the uniformity of meaning may make a presentation truth in epistemological sense, but it certainly takes away the objective sense of truth.

It, therefore, lays more stress upon the realistic sense of truth than the idealistic or the pragmatic sense, and defines it as something which exists in itself apart from all subjective relations.

Truth is. Knowledge does not make any difference in it. It is, no matter whether it is known or not known, its meaning understood or not understood. And in a sense, it can be said to have no meaning, for meaning is relative to a subject but truth transcends all relations. It allows no judgment, either of truth or falsity. Truth, as judgment, implies also falsity, and a judgment is true or false in reference to a certain universe of the subject. Falsity or truth is, therefore, of the meaning and not of the object. The object is what it is. It is neither true nor false.

Being is, therefore, truth in the transcendent sense without any reference to anything. This realistic sense of truth is what commands the greatest attention of the Vedantist, for the limitation of truth to meaning has been the fruitful source of a confusion between the absolute and the relative. The difficulty of man has been that he cannot transcend the limitations of relativistic consciousness and naturally takes the value or the meaning of the relative order to be absolute truth.

Vedanta draws a distinction between the absolute and relative orders of existence and maintains that even in relative order the truth of meaning is not uniform everywhere. An apparent meaning of a presentation is contradicted by another, and meaning changes with the universes of discourse. The same appearance has different meanings in different universes. The meaning changes by position and sublation of the different aspects of the appearance. No meaning can be absolute meaning and the relative order, therefore, is subject to changes in significance and value.

Advaitism, therefore, concludes that the order of meaning and value can never be an order of absolute existence, and whatever satisfaction it can give in the form of meaning and value cannot offer absolute satisfaction which is the demand of religious consciousness. Religious impelling is an impelling to bliss consequent upon the expanse of

being and the two can be hardly separated. Worth or value has an intimate relation with truth or existence, and Vedanta places truth before value, for value does not exactly prove the truth of a thing, on the other hand, value is consequent on truth.

Value in relative order is associated with meaning and personality and is intimate with the creativeness of the subject, but in the absolute existence value is associated with being, for a non-being can have no value. But in the absolute value has a sense of security of being but does not indicate an agreeable feeling or a gratifying worth.

Even in the relative order value presupposes truth, a false concept or percept can have a seeming value, but when it is sublated its value vanishes. The pragmatic affirmation that value proves truth is a wide hit. It demands the prospect of value establishing the truth of false percept. Truth is, therefore, the fundamental concept, and Mayavada points out that value or worth of moral and religious consciousness does not establish their absolute truth.

This should make clear that when Vedanta puts down Ananda or Bliss as the quest of spiritual life, it does not take it to mean an agreeable consciousness or a fruition of an urge, but the supreme fact of an undivided being and an integral consciousness.

Vedanta draws a distinction between worth or value as an object of pursuit and fruition and worth and value as supreme existence. The former is the search of exoteric consciousness, the latter, of esoteric consciousness.

#### VALUE AS BLISS

Value in the latter sense has the import of blissful consciousness. Religious consciousness is associated with bliss, for, if the spiritual life has an attraction, it chiefly lies in the promise of a continued blissful consciousness. Vedanta declares that spiritual life is more a being than realisation; it is not necessarily a seeking. A seeking and

an evolution, however high, are a move of life and consciousness, but a move is consistent with finite urges but cannot be true of spiritual fulfilment. Spiritual fulfilment cannot be a constant growth, for it still smacks of limitation and cannot give us absolute security and peace.

#### FORMS OF SPIRITUAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Vedanta, therefore, recognises two forms of spiritual consciousness, (1) absolute and (2) concrete. The absolute is true spiritual existence in the sense of an undivided bliss and being. Absoluteness is blissfulness. Any division is opposed to it and denies bliss in the sense of supreme existence. The concrete spiritual life is the seeking of bliss as value, as an agreeable consciousness, arising from the quickening of the divided life and being.

Religion, in the ordinary sense of seeking an agreeable consciousness, (which is the value of religious life) is an oscillation of the dynamic being in man, but even in this oscillation and pursuit the end is not fellowship with a community of spirits, as theists claim, but the gradual assimilation of the dynamic divine in man.

The falsity of vision, the creation of Maya, is sought to be got over not only in the transcendent consciousness but also in the immanent, for, Maya creates a division where there is none, and the religious life must be bent upon removing the sense of division even in immanent consciousness, for the division is illusory, identity, truth.

In the relative consciousness the division is inherent, and it sounds illogical to lay stress upon the removal of division in the sphere of relative existence.

But here lies the true significance of Vedanta as a system of spiritual discipline, for, even if the relative order is full of divisions, created by ignorance, the dawn of knowledge even in the rudimentary state will realise that this division is not absolute and the elasticity of life and consciousness can dis-

pense with them. The distinctions of the relative order which realistic consciousness accepts as almost rigid, the more elastic dynamic being regards as temporary and creations of the crude ignorance.

Vedanta, therefore, even in the concrete spiritual life tries to get over the distinctions of crude ignorance by annulling the epistemological divisions of realistic consciousness and cultivating the sense of identity with the dynamic divine. This assimilation of the dynamic divine puts off the sense of division of the humanistic consciousness and the relative order does no longer appear as fixed up in eternal divisions.

#### CONCRETE SPIRITUAL LIFE

In the concrete spiritual life Mayavada does not lay so much stress upon the reception of the spiritual felicities and gratifications in theistic spirit, but seeks to transcend them in the assimilation of the dynamic divine in the finite itself. The value or worth here is sought not in the gratification or possession of possibilities however high, but in the security of being in the assimilation of the infinite. Mayavada does not accept an absolute distinction between the infinite and the finite even in immanence, and therefore, its spiritual outlook in concrete life is not confined to the enjoyment of the divine life. Spiritual life is opposed to the life of division and is directed to the removal and final destruction of ignorance.

But in the concrete spiritual life the final destruction of ignorance is neither possible nor aimed at, for, Maya is both creative and enfolding and this enfolding functions in a primary and a secondary way. Primarily it hides the absolute identity, secondarily it creates a division between Iswara and Jiva, the finite and the infinite. The concrete spiritual life seeks to throw away this secondary division by gradually assimilating the infinite in the finite. As already said, the distinction is not absolutely fixed. Mayavada offers elasticity

of being to Jiva. The finitude of Jiva in Mayavada is the finitude of Upadhi. It is the limitation of radiation but not the limitation of being. And since the distinction of being or of power is not absolute in Mayavada, the limitation can be set aside by spiritual culture. In fact spiritual culture in concrete life is the shuffling off of this limitation and the growth and absorption of more power and being.

This attempt, therefore, is essentially to establish an identity between the dynamic divine and the finite self, for the more the identity is established by the removal of the limitation of the finite consciousness, the more is then the access of powers and expansive radiation of the dynamic divine.

#### AHAM GRAHA UPASANA

Aham Graha Upasana is, therefore, an important state in the spiritual life in so far as it helps to leave aside the sense of division between the worshipper and the worshipped. Worship is essentially an attempt to feel the divine presence. In Mayavada it is more. It is the assimilation of the infinite. And this becomes possible when the worshipper sacrifices the delights of fellowship to receive the greater delight of the expansive being. The more is the detachment from the joys of life, the more is the possibility of assimilating the dynamic divine. The immediate effect is the equilibrium of the dynamic being. This equilibrium is the cause and the effect of greater penetration and assimilation. This identification, therefore, is a great achievement in so far as it destroys the distinction between the finite and the infinite and allows the finite to realise that the finitude can be occasionally overcome, if not completely destroyed.

Spiritual ascent, therefore, implies the tearing of the concentration of being and the gradual progressive expression or diffusion. The finite centres then display uncommon powers and energies, for they have now under con-

trol the dynamism of Maya. This control puts the soul in the convenient position of a creative and productive centre. It attains Iswarahood or, more properly, the restricted consciousness of Jiva dies out and the more elastic consciousness of Iswara has its play. Iswara becomes active, Jiva is overshadowed. The more the impelling proceeds from the dynamic divine, the more is the freedom.

Aham Graha Upasana has the direct effect of establishing identity between the dynamic being of Jiva and Iswara. It obliterates the difference between the two by silencing the native impelling of Jiva and by opening the cosmic impelling. It does not magnify the human existence. It drops down the veil between the finite and the infinite and makes the infinite more consciously active in man.

But the progressive spiritual ascent does not rest here, for, the concentration is still assertive and the limitation of consciousness and power is still active. The concrete divine still suffers this limitation, though it is widely radiative. But radiation still bespeaks of a limitation even if it is all-inclusive and all-embracing. It means reference to a centre and spreading out in all directions. Even when the radiation is all-inclusive it cannot help presupposing a radiating centre and an influence. This mutual implication of a centralisation and a radiation bespeaks of a limitation of the dynamic divine.

Mayavada, therefore, proceeds a step further and seeks to transcend all limitations. Here the search is no longer religious but becomes essentially philosophic. It requires a deeper penetration to see through the urges of dynamic divine and to transcend them in the quietus of being.

The spiritual ascent has, therefore, here the second and the final movement, not in the sense of further assimilation of divine but in the sense of breaking the initial ignorance which

makes the absolute appear as the concrete infinite.

This removal of primary ignorance does not lie in the further expansion of being, for, rightly understood, the absolute being has neither expansion nor contraction. Nor is it the absolute expanse. These terms can be, at best, an inadequate expression of the absolute. The absolute cannot be categorically defined and, spiritually speaking, it is reached when the human consciousness has the conviction that no difference ever exists in the basic being.

There is difference, then, between the final removal of ignorance and its partial tearing in Aham Graha Upasana. The latter removes the limitation of power, the former, the limitation of being. No doubt, with the removal of the limitation of power, the being feels its expansiveness frequently, if not always, but still this is not expanse of being in the absolute sense.

#### TATVAMASI

Tatvamasi has, therefore, two implications: (1) it may magnify the finite self and this magnification is a finer move of psychic consciousness and is a direct path to the wider vision and subtler move of being; or (2) it may cultivate the transcendent consciousness by the complete detachment from the dynamic move of being, however fine, subtle and graceful. It always directs the attention to the truth of identity and finally breaks the spell of Maya.

The former energises the finite consciousness. The latter removes the veil and brings the history of life to a final close.

The former makes it possible to realise the ideality of space and time by removing the realistic divisions, and establishing the elasticity of being, the latter soars in transcendence by the complete realisation of their negation in the absolute and illusoriness of the drama of cosmic existence. The former does not kill Maya, it accepts it and energises it. The latter kills it. The



former accepts it as the principle of becoming, the latter, as illusion.

Unless the ascent has been right up to the summit, spiritual life has not that challenge to the order of Maya, which can set aside the happiness and the miseries of divided existence.

Vedantism is eloquent that a God cannot satisfy, far less can save man, unless man be spiritually bold enough to give up the clinging to the personal self, its delights and privileges for the truth of the identity. The dance of life with its charms and delights, with all its fascinations, cannot compare to the quiet of transcendence. Identity gives the freedom of being.

Though the final consummation is reached in the direct knowledge of identity, yet the force and value of Aham Graha Upasana cannot be denied in spiritual life. The direct ascent to and the realisation of the identity is a possibility with the few, for the denial of the world order as illusory presupposes an idealistic sense of it, and this idealistic sense is actually realised in the soarings of consciousness in the dynamic divine. There alone a sense of an independent and a creative world disappears, and the truth of "esse is percipit" is fully realised.

Such an elasticity of the dynamic being is a great asset, and naturally the soul feels an attraction and a clinging to this possibility of divine self and would be unwilling to part with the ease and freedom of such an existence unless the Saksi-consciousness is there to help the final liberation.

#### SAKSI

Saksi is the consciousness indifferent to the functioning of the dynamic self and is equally present in each centre of consciousness, Jiva or Iswara. The expansive dynamic life is to be crossed before the final consummation can be reached.

This expansive consciousness has this significance in it, that it suffers from no crude impelling, and in it the

self enjoys the quiet of a fuller being which makes it convenient for it to reach the final distinction between the transcendent intuition and the concrete spiritual life. In fact it soon comes to feel that immanence is not so much real as the transcendence and in the transcendence all distinctions of radiation, influence and centre die out naturally. The idea and necessity of an all-inclusive absolute is relative to Maya, and before the absolute point of existence can be reached it is necessary to break the charm of an all-inclusive absolute. It is necessary, therefore, to rise above the sense of distinction to get to the absolute intuition, and this is helped by the clear perception of the difference between the Saksi-consciousness and the dynamic divine.

It should be pointed out here that this expansion in dynamic being and consciousness is not an absolute necessity to the realisation of the transcendent intuition, and the human consciousness without Aham Graha Upasana can, at once, go deeper and break the veil of the primary ignorance, for Saksi is equally manifest in Jiva as well as Iswara. Nothing can cover it. If the dynamic being be free from the crude impelling of the lower self and calms down, Saksi becomes self-luminous. It is not necessary to develop the dynamic being by the heightening of consciousness by a meditative effort.

Be it noted that whatever be the method of approach, Mayavada finally lays stress upon the clear analytic penetration into the degrees of existence, and unless the seeker is equipped with their knowledge, it has every chance of losing itself in the finer oscillation of being.

And, therefore, towards the final realisation, the assimilation of a more expansive being is not so much a help as the clear sense of difference between the degrees of existence and the intellectual boldness to leave the lower existences aside and seek the identity.

The process of assimilation is not so

much a help to liberation as the clear sense of difference between the transcendent and other phases of existence and the effort for a fixation in the former and a denial of the latter.

This, indeed, sounds strange and involves a strain of imagination, for the delight is sought in the finer move of life. But spiritual evolution has to be distinguished from final emancipation.

Evolution is a fine display of divided existence but not of the absolute. In the absolute life has neither play nor history, though it thereby suffers no disadvantages, no limitation. Mayavada denies, in the highest form of spiritual realisation, the delights of the finer possibilities of life, but in so doing, it is anxious to confer on the seeker the deeper privilege of wisdom and freedom.

## THE EDUCATION OF INDIAN WOMEN

By SISTER NIVEDITA

I

It is not only India, but the world as a whole, that is being agitated today, by the question of the future of Woman. In India, discussion centres on her right to education: in Europe, it centres on her right to political expression. In one form or another, Woman is everywhere the unknown quantity, the being of uncertain destiny. We are in no position to help Europe, in the solution of her problems: it is sufficient for the present, if we can bring a little clear thought to bear on our own.

What do we mean by an educated woman? What is our ideal for woman? What, for the matter of that, is our ideal for man? What is an educated man?

As usual, it is easier to say what education is *not*, than to define what it is, or ought to be. And first, in order to test the depth and extent of education, we go instinctively to the examination of the individual's relation to the community about him. Evidently education is partly a question of social adjustment. If we find a man growing more and more extravagant, as he grows poorer, can we call him an ideally educated person? If we find a wife making it impossible for her husband to cut down his expenses when neces-

sary, fighting against him, instead of with him, on behalf of personal comfort and enjoyment, rather than the well-being of the family, can we call her an educated woman? If the captain of a ship behaved in such a manner, could we call him a skilled navigator? Evidently education is a word that implies the power to survey a situation and put oneself into a right relation to it. A woman cannot do this,—she cannot even submit herself to her own husband—unless she has the power and habit of self-control. Self-control, then, with wisdom and love, must be the crown of the educated woman. In other words, education, finally, works on the will, and installs the heart and the intellect as its loyal and harmonious servants. *To be able to will nobly and efficiently* has been described as the goal of education. The end of all culture lies in character.

But the situation to be surveyed, may be more or less complex. And according to its complexity will be the training it requires. Very little intellectual training is needed, to enable a woman to watch her daily bazaar. The great land-owner requires more, for the management of her tenants and estates. Some knowledge of engineering, of agriculture, of the laws of banking and returns upon investments, a far

sight about building and afforestation, and a generous identification of interests, will all be of value to the woman-zemindar. Yet even here, it will be noticed that knowledge itself is nothing, without the wisdom and love that are to use that knowledge. And this discrimination it is that tells the woman what virtue to put in practice on any particular occasion. The mother and housewife must above all things be careful about cleanliness and good habits. The great Hindu queen, Ahalya Bai, shows her wisdom by special consideration for her Mahommedan subjects.

The days that are now upon us, demand of each man and woman a wider outlook than was ever before the case. No single question can be settled to-day, in the light of its bearing upon the private home. Even the food we eat or the cloth we wear, carries a responsibility with it, to those whose well-being will make or unmake the prosperity of our children and grandchildren. The interests of the coolie in Madras are knit up with those of the labourer in the Punjab. In order to understand these facts, and weigh them well, it is clear that a good deal of intellectual preparation is necessary. A very ignorant woman cannot even comprehend what is meant by them. This intellectual training is what we usually call education.

But it is evident that the name is a mistake. It is her awakened sense of responsibility that constitutes the truly educated woman. It is her love and pity for her own people, and the wisdom with which she considers their interests, that marks her out as modern and cultivated and great. The geography and history that she has learnt, or the English books she has read, are nothing in themselves, unless they help her to this love and wisdom. Scraps of cloth will not clothe us, however great their quantity! There must be a unity and a fitness, in the garment that is worn.

This new knowledge, however, in a truly great woman, will modify every action. Before yielding blindly to prejudice, she will now consider the direction in which that prejudice is working. If she indulges her natural feeling, will it tend to the establishment in India of nobler ideals, or will it merely make for social vanity, and meaningless restrictions? Even the finest of women may make mistakes in the application of these new principles. But honest mistakes lead to knowledge and correct themselves.

The education of woman, then is still, as it always was, a matter of developing the heart, and making the intellect efficient as servant, not as lord. The nobility of the will is the final test of culture, and the watch-towers of the will are in the affections.

## II

We must think strongly about education. We must know what are its highest results. Let us suppose that a girl learns to read and write, and spends her whole time afterwards over sensational novels. The fact is, that girl, in spite of her reading and writing, remains uneducated. Reading and writing are nothing in themselves. *She has not learnt how to choose her reading.* She is uneducated, whatever be her nationality. That many Western people both men and women, *are* uneducated in this deepest and best sense, is proved by the character of common railway-bookstall periodicals. Education in reality means *training of the will*.

It is not enough to render the will noble: it ought also to be made efficient if the true educational ideal is to be attained; and it is this latter clause which necessitates our schooling in many branches of knowledge and activity. But efficiency without nobility is worse than useless; it is positively destructive. Infinitely better, nobility without efficiency; the moral and ideal preparation for life, without any acquaintance with special processes.

Let India never tamper with the place that the Mahabharata and the Ramayana hold in the households of the simple. Her own passionate love of Sita and Savitri is woman's best education. Her overflowing admiration for Bhishma, for Yudhishthira, for Karna, is the wife's best offering, and the mother's best schooling, to the manhood of the home.

Does this mean, however, that Indian women are not to learn to read and write? Let us ask, in reply, if Indian women are inferior to all the other women of the world? Unless they are, why should it be supposed that they alone are unfit for an extension of the means of self-expression, to which all the other women of the nineteenth century have been found equal? Has Indian *Dharma*, with all its dreams of noble womanhood, succeeded only in producing a being so feeble that she cannot stand alone, so faithless that the door may not be opened in her presence, so purposeless that added knowledge tends only to make her frivolous and self-indulgent? Modern Europe has produced great women. Is modern India incapable of doing likewise? Is our future evolution to be determined by our faith, or by our fear? Are we to insist on remaining mediaeval, lest harm come of change?

Even if we were so faithless as to answer 'Yes' to all these questions, it would be useless, for the Mother Herself has taken option out of our hands. Change is upon us, and necessity of change. The waves overwhelm us. Nothing is left for us, but to find out how to deal with them, how to make them forces of construction, how to live in our own day a life so lofty and so heroic that three centuries hence men shall look back upon this as one of the great ages of India, and desire to write a Mahabharata of the twentieth century.

Amongst other things, the education of the Indian woman must be modernised. Fathers feel this, where grand-

fathers fail, grandfathers know it, where fathers oppose. Let there be no fear! The Indian civilisation is at least as great as any other in the world. There is no reason to believe that a little more sunlight will cause it to melt away! The Indian woman is as great as any. No amount of added knowledge could ever make her mean.

But let it be remembered that the true heart of education is in its ideals. There ought to be interaction between school and home. But the home is the chief of these two factors. To it, the school should be subordinated, and not the reverse. That is to say, the education of an Indian girl should be directed towards making of her a more truly Indian woman. She must be enabled by it to recognise for herself what are the Indian ideals, and how to achieve them; not made contemptuous of those ideals, and left to gather her own from the moral and social chaos of novels by Ouida.

Fathers and mothers must not suppose, when their children go to school, that their own task is ended! Rather must the thought of *Dharma* increase daily in the household. Indian ideals of family-cohesion, of charity, of frugality and of honour; the admiration of the national heroes; the fund of poetic legends, must be daily and hourly discussed and commented on. All that makes India India, must flow through the Indian home to make it Indian. The family is something of a club, it must be remembered, and the true school of character, and the best education of children is the conversation of their parents. When the home-duty is done in this way, there is no doubt whatever as to the ennobling effect of school on the womanly, as much as on the manly character. Let us all beware of the danger of leaving our own duties undone, and charging the results to the account of some great cause, like that of the modern education of the Indian woman.

## SANSKRIT CULTURE IN MODERN INDIA—II

BY MAHAMAHOPADHYAYA HARAPRASAD SHASTRI, M.A., C.I.E., HON. D. LITT.

Audacious ignorance was certain in the early nineteenth century that Sanskrit literature and for the matter of that even Arabic and Persian literature could afford no education. But I have shown before that Northern, Eastern and Southern Asia were saturated with Indian culture; and I am in a position to assert that at one time even Persia and the Eastern Roman Empire came greatly within the influence of Indian culture. Apart from other evidences found in those regions, we find it stated in a palm-leaf manuscript, copied in Bengal in the early eleventh century (the Vimalaprabhā, commentary on the Buddhist Kālacakra Tantra, now in Bengal Asiatic Society), that the Buddhist scriptures were translated in Persia and in Nīlānadyuttare Rūhma-dēśe i.e., in the Rūhma or eastern Roman country to the north of the Nile.

Education through the medium of the English language was started with the idea that Sanskrit and Arabic can afford no culture. Hundred years after that mistake, as I consider it, it now appears that the whole of Asia and the eastern portion of Europe was saturated with Indian culture. The value of Arabic in the preservation and dissemination of culture in the mediaeval and early modern world, whether in Western Asia or in Europe, need not be dilated upon by myself. The mischief in relegating Sanskrit (and Arabic) culture to a secondary place, and in not modernising it (like what has been done in the mediaeval universities of Europe with the Latin culture) has been great. Reparation is not yet impossible, and as a student of Sanskrit of the old type which is apparently going out of fashion, I hope that the forces against Sanskrit are not strong

enough to kill it outright, but that it will appear and reappear throughout in its pristine vigour, but in a modified form, to greatly influence the forces that may get the upper hand. In the third century B. C. Vedic ritualism was not revised but modified into Pauranic religion. In the eleventh century A.D. Sanskrit became strong by absorbing much that was not Hindu. In the twenty-first century it may do the same and absorb most of the Western ideas; but what shape it will take it is now too early to predict.

With the advent of the twentieth century, a change came over the spirit of the dream. The long vision of Rādhākīṣan had perhaps seen something of it. All of a sudden, the princes and potentates of India were seized with a patriotic fervour and started the publication of Sanskrit works. At the end of the nineteenth century, there were some attempts made by the Maharaja of Darbhanga and the Raja of Vizianagram to issue series of Sanskrit works, but they were not very successful. But, nevertheless, they showed the way. The first decade of the twentieth century saw the Mysore and the Trivandrum series start their useful career with magnificent contributions from ancient Indian authorship. The next decade found the Gaekwad and the Kashmir Darbars engaged in the same intellectual work, and I anticipate, the whole body of princes and potentates of India will be busy with publishing ancient Sanskrit works of great value found within their territories. His Exalted Highness the Nizam of Hyderabad has started a series of Arabic and Islamic works. But he occupies the very heart of the ancient Hindu civilisation in the Deccan. Many of the capitals of

ancient and mediæval Hindu rule are situated within his dominions. For the sake of his Hindu subjects and for the sake of the wider culture of modern India, he, the premier Indian prince and true patron of arts and letters and founder of the first Vernacular University in India, would only be acting according to the traditions of his great house, if he ordered not only a thorough search of Sanskrit manuscripts and manuscripts in Sanskritic languages within his dominions, but also the publication of a Sanskrit series, the value of which would be simply enormous. Already his archaeological department has made many important discoveries, the most important of which is the Maski edict establishing the identity of Aśoka with Priyadarśi; his Government has undertaken as a most enlightened measure the conservation, preservation and maintenance of the famous Buddhist and Brahmanical cave temples of Ajanta and Ellora. Starting a Sanskrit series will, I suppose, be of equal value with all these. Numerous Vaiṣṇava, Śaiva, Jaina and Buddhist sects had their origin within his dominions, and some of these great seats of ancient learning are situated there like Paithan and Warangal. The exploration of this vast but virgin field at his instance will bring the present ruler, already distinguished by the above enlightened measures, honour and glory as a patron of learning, irrespective of caste or creed, equally with that of an Akbar.

We often hear of retrenchments made in this department of work on economical grounds. Such retrenchments are surely a bad economy. It is a spirit of parsimony wholly unbecoming of the great Indian states. The return from the outlay on Sanskrit series, even in pound, shilling and pence, is not discouraging. I will give one example. The *Bibliotheca Indica* series was started by the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1849; and within these 80 years it has published 1729

fasciculi of nearly a hundred pages each, 289 of distinct, separate and independent works; sold books worth Rs. 400,000 and has a stock of double that value, none of which, I believe, will prove to be a dead stock. Under proper advertisement and even supervision the sale is increasing. The Government which financed, does not even want to take back its original capital. So the capital and profit all go to the fund. But that is a small matter. Look at the enormous knowledge that has been disseminated throughout the world, which would otherwise have been locked in illegible manuscripts, written on perishable material. One would be inclined to think that the entire Indology has been pushed forward by the publication of this ancient series, the name of which should be written in letters of gold—the *BIBLIOTHECA INDICA*.

One charge generally levelled against the *Bibliotheca Indica* series is that some of the works are not properly edited, to which the short answer of Dr. Hoernle was that they at least multiplied bad manuscripts and that the very multiplication is a service. But in that series for one such badly edited work there are scores which are really excellent.

The Bombay Sanskrit series is another well edited series, but this seems to have aimed more at educational needs of Colleges and Universities than those of scholars who want to push forward research.

But the various series started by the princes of India have a very different character. They do not get their inspiration from Europe. The editors are Indian scholars trained in India, belong to ancient Sanskritic families which are celebrated for learning and piety, and are or have been devoted to the study of Sanskrit as a part and parcel of their very lives. These scholars work with a single-minded devotion and their selection of works is more choice than in many other

series ; for instance, Madhusūdan Kaul of Kashmir selects only those works on Śaiva Philosophy which in the ninth, tenth and eleventh centuries made Kashmir famous. He also chooses those Tāntrika works on which that system of philosophy was based, *viz.*, Sacchanda Tantra, Mālinī-vijaya Tantra, Tantrāloka and others. It is a pity, however, that the great work of Kashmir, Abhinava-Gupta's commentary on Bharata's Nāṭya-śāstra should be forestalled by the Gackwad series at Baroda, which has taken the entire credit in publishing the chapters on dance with illustrations for each dance-pose from ancient Southern Indian sculpture. The first volume only is published, and the others are awaited with the highest of expectations. The Gackwad series opened with a wonderful work, entitled the Kāvya-Mīmāṃsā, a work on literary criticism of the highest value, which has been edited by that excellent scholar, the late Mr. C. D. Dalal. But it is very unfortunate that only a small fraction of a big series of books has been discovered and published; for it is said that the work consisted of 18 such parts;—the other 17 parts are irretrievably lost.

We were hearing of quinquennial assemblies in ancient India in Aśoka's inscriptions, in Hiuen T'sang's accounts but the Kāvya-Mīmāṃsā gives us an inside view of these royal assemblages for rewarding merit in science and art. The book is replete with literary legends and traditions of ancient India and was written in the beginning of the tenth century A.D. The publication of the Sādhanā-mālā in this series completes the Buddhist iconographic literature of India. These Sādhanās were composed by professors of later Buddhism,—of Mantra-Yāna, of Vajra-Yāna, of Sahaja-Yāna and of Kālacakra-Yāna,—schools of Mahāyāna Buddhism during the eighth, ninth, tenth and eleventh centuries of the Christian era; and they were collected together in the form of Saṃgrahas in

the twelfth century. They are entirely Indian in character. We know from Tibetan sources that about this time an opinion gained ground in the Buddhist world that in the art of painting and sculpture, India, as known intimately to the Tibetans, *i.e.*, Magadha and Bengal, excelled; next came the Newars of Nepal, the Tibetans came next, and the Chinese last of all. This statement has been fully justified so far as Magadha and Bengal are concerned by the iconographic sculpture that we have been getting during the last twenty years in all parts of Eastern India. The latest great work of the Gackwad series, is the Tattva-saṃgraha of Śāntarakṣita who was the first great Lama of Tibet. It is a wonderful book. It refutes twenty other systems of philosophy in India and establishes the Mahāyāna system. It gives us materials in plenty for settling the chronology of a great deal of the philosophical literature of India. The eighth was a wonderful century in which all the religious and philosophical sects of India put forth their best endeavours to establish their supremacy over others. Early in the century Kumārila, with his Śloka-vārtika, Tantra-vārtika and Ṭup-Ṭikā on the Śābara-bhāṣya, endeavoured to establish the supremacy of the Vedic culture. Then came the voluminous writer, Haribhadra, the reputed author of 1400 treatises, to do the same thing for Jaina culture, Jaina religion and Jaina philosophy. The third was Śāntarakṣita, from the Dacca District. He was closely related to the family of Indra-bhūti, a Rājā of Orissa, who advocated the Vajra-Yāna system of the Mahāyāna School. He was also closely associated with his brother-in-law, Padma-sambhava, who converted the Tibetans to Buddhism and is regarded by them as a second Buddha. His work, the Tattva-saṃgraha, with a commentary by his pupil Kamala-śīla, is a very brilliant achievement, and H. H. the Gackwad's Oriental Institute gets

all the credit in publishing it. At the end of the century came Śaṅkarācārya with his vast learning, refuting all sectarian opinions and establishing a monism which holds its ground all over India. Śānta-rakṣita and Kamala-śīla were very brilliant men of the eighth century.

In the twentieth century the first series that came out under the patronage of a big state was the Mysore series. It began to publish choice works and choice commentaries on Vedic and philosophical works. It at once attracted public attention, and people became anxious to see new issues. Two works appeared which are of immense importance for the elucidation of ancient Indian society. One is the *Gotra-Pravara-Prabandha-Kadamba* i.e., a collection of treatises on Gotras and Pravaras by which the Brahmins or rather the members of the twice-born castes distinguished themselves from one another. The great attraction of the book was an index of Gotras with about 4000 names, and a chart showing the relation amongst the Pravara ṛṣis. The word Pravara was very little understood even by the great jurists of India, but this Mysore treatise gave its real meaning; and the real sense of the term is that it means those ṛṣis in whose names the sacrificial fire is to be invoked. The theory was that in a sacrifice if a man invoked the Fire-God in his own name, he, the Fire-God, would not respond. If the Fire-God was invoked in the name of all the human ancestors of the sacrificer he was not likely to respond either. But if the God was invoked in the name of that ṛṣi ancestor of the Vajamāna or sacrificer, who was a friend of the God, then the deity would know him and would come to his descendant's sacrifice. The publication of this collection of authoritative works on the genealogies of the ancient Brahmins has been a very great service to the orthodox in the Hindu community, who have always believed in the Gotras

and Pravaras and regulated their lines according to that belief.

The second boon which the Mysore series had the honour to confer is the *Artha-śāstra* of Kauṭilya. Kauṭilya's name was well-known. He was the same person as our great Cāṇakya who destroyed the Nanda Empire, and installed Candra-Gupta as Emperor of India. But his *Artha-śāstra* was not known. Our friend, Pandit Dr. Shama-shastri, discovered the work, edited and re-edited it with fresh materials, translated it into English, and gave an all-word index to it and made many interesting researches about it. Eighty years ago the discovery of Hiuen T'sang's itinerary gave us an insight into ancient Indian life, both Brahminical and Buddhist, of the seventh century A.D. That was by a foreigner. He noted down only those facts which appeared to be important and interesting to the Chinese Buddhists; but Kauṭilya's *Artha-śāstra* twenty years ago laid bare the whole world of Indian life at the time of India's greatest prosperity. Hiuen T'sang, a devout Buddhist monk that he was, looked at the rich and varied life of India of his time with the eye of a religious recluse; but Cāṇakya looked upon Indian life from the point of view of a great administrator, a great organiser and a great politician. Here we find Indian life in all its aspects—the principle being the organisation of *Varṇāśrama* or the castes and stages of life on which Hindu society is based. It is a curious fact that the account we get in Kauṭilya's *Artha-śāstra* agrees mainly and generally with that given by Megasthenes in the same century and at the same court.

Political economy is a modern science in Europe. It started with Adam Smith's "Wealth of Nations," published in the year 1776 A. D.; and within a century and a half it has branched off into so many sciences, but *Artha-śāstra* is twenty-three hundred years old. Kauṭilya, how-



ever, was not the first writer on Artha-śāstra but very nearly the last. He quoted fifteen or sixteen different authorities and names of four different schools, advocating from the primitive coercion to the regulation of the entire life of a nation. Adam Smith speaks of four different stages of development of political ideas in Europe from the Dark Ages onwards. The first is the protection of life and property alone in the Merovingian and Carolingian times, 800 to 1200 A. D. Kings during this period thought that if they only protected the lives of their subjects, they did all their duties. Commerce and trade they would not protect. That was left to the traders themselves. These began to combine to protect their trade. Nearly 150 cities of Northern Europe thus combined to protect their commercial interests. But the united traders often defied their kings. That led kings to come forward and protect trade, a fact which finally brought about the dissolution of the Hanseatic league about the fifteenth century. We have here the second stage. Then came the third stage. After the fall of the Eastern Roman Empire in 1453 A.D. and the Reformation of Luther later, it became apparent to many states in Europe, that the leadership of the Church, i.e., the control of religion, should no longer remain in the hands of the Pope, but should be vested in the state. The king of England became the protector of religion, and England's example was followed in other Protestant countries. As ideas advanced, Government thought it fit to control the liberal education of the entire nation, and we have the fourth or the last stage in the development of national polity.

This is the history of the advance of political life in Europe. Kauṭilya gives the history of political advance of India in a few sentences. He says, Śukrācārya thought that kings should learn Dandanīti only i.e., merely coercion for the protection of life and

property. Vṛhaspati thought that kings should learn not only Dandanīti but also Vārtā, which includes agriculture, trade and pasture. Manu thought that they should impart to them higher culture also; but Cāṇakya and his Ācāryas thought that they should include the Trayī or the Vedas also. A comparison between the progress of political ideas in Europe and India will show that Cāṇakya's political ideas were those of modern Europe. Cāṇakya was not like Adam Smith a promulgator of a new science but the heir to a long series of development of political ideas.

The importance of the publication of the Artha-śāstra cannot be overrated. It has already made Doctors by the score in the Universities of India and Europe; but the inner meaning is very little understood owing to the want of intimate and extensive acquaintance with Indian literature, which a mastery of such a work as the Artha-śāstra requires. In this connection one cannot help admiring Prof. Samashastri who is doing every thing to help students in this direction. I may repeat: he has twice edited the work; once translated it into English, given an all-word index to it and edited the Sūtras of Cāṇakya in the hope that they may throw light on his Artha-śāstra. He has not only done much himself, but also inspired others. The late lamented Mahamahopadhyaya Ganapati Sastri edited the work with a commentary of his own, and Prof. Jolly has given a fourth edition of it with the help of a new manuscript at Tübingen. Messrs. Motilal Banarsi Das, the well-known Sanskrit publishers of Lahore, have given Prof. Jolly the hospitality of their series.

I mention the Trivandrum Sanskrit series at the end, simply because I wish to say something about the late lamented Ganapati Sastri who, without any knowledge of English, edited a wonderful series of works with prefatory notices in Sanskrit, which

will be admired all over the world for their boldness and insight into the spirit of Sanskrit literature. He began with very select works which could not be found anywhere but which were very valuable to students of Sanskrit and gave valuable information about ancient India. He surprised the learned world by the publication of the 13 works of Bhāsa, wonderful dramas giving a thorough insight into the life of India some centuries before Christ. He was criticised and the criticism was adverse to his chronology. Some said the Sanskrit of these dramas was not so old, others said the Prākṛt was not so old. Some found in the epilogue the name of a Kānva king. But I believe that Mahamahopadhyaya Ganapati Sastri was right in putting Bhāsa in the fourth century B. C. ; for there are many things in the Pratijñā-Yaugandharāyaṇa, in the Svapna-Vāsavadattā and in the Pratimā-nāṭaka, which show that they cannot have been written later. The enumeration of the royal families of Northern India, to which Mahā-sena, the king of Ujjayini, could marry his daughter, could not be written in later centuries, when all memory of Mahā-sena was lost. The worship of the stone images of ancestors, as given in the Pratimā-nāṭaka, has raised a huge controversy ; one party saying that the custom was in vogue at the time of the Śiśunāgas ; others say that they were much later. But it is a curious fact that in the Jāṅgala country i.e., Bikaner, all royal personages from Bika downwards have their stone images, and to these stone images offerings of food in the shape of Puris are made to the extent of nearly a maund. In many old capitals, now in ruins, are found images of royal personages on horseback when they died in battle, and in other positions when they died a natural death. Cremation is an old custom ; to mark cremation grounds with Stūpas was also an ancient custom. But the custom of erecting stone images there is not yet

known from ancient works. But Ganapati Sastri wrote to me to say that in the Pratimā-nāṭaka a custom is recorded of throwing sand in the enclosure, and this is found in Āpastamba's work only, and Āpastamba belongs to the fifth century B. C.

But the publication of Bhāsa's works is not the only thing on which Ganapati Sastri's fame rests. He published in three volumes the Mañjuśrī-mūla-Kalpa, a Buddhist work, belonging to a very early period, on which the Mantra-Yāna and other subsequent Yānas of the Buddhists are based. How he got the Buddhist work in the extreme South of India is one wonder, and how he unravelled the mysteries of a complicated Buddhist ritual is another. The publication of this ancient Buddhist work is likely to lead to further discoveries of the Guhya-saṃāja school of Buddhism, which branched off from Mahāyāna, leaving philosophy behind, and proceeded straight to mysticism. "The Bija or seed proceeds from Bodhi which is nothing else but Śūnyatā. From Bija proceeds the image and in the image there are internal and external representation," and this is deep mysticism indeed. This is the same as making the letters of the alphabet represent deities, only expressed in mystic and Buddhist language.

The third great work which M. M. Ganapati Sastri produced is the Śaiva-paddhati by Iśāna-śiva-guru-deva. In the tenth century an association of Śaivite learned men was formed in Central India, known as the Mattamayūra-varhṣā. The Gurus of this association ended their names with the word Śiva, viz., Iśāna Śiva, Vimala Śiva, etc. They were great builders of temples and converted many chiefs to their faith. Some of their works are to be found in the Darbar Library, Nepal. Ganapati Sastri got hold of one of their works and published it, giving a key to the whole literature.

The versatility of M. M. Pandit Ganapati Sastri is very striking. He handled works on all Śāstras with equal facility ; Śilpa, Nīti, Pāñca-rātra, Philosophy, Architecture, Philosophy of Grammar, Rhetoric, Lexicons, Jyotiṣa, Sphoṭa, Music,—all were welcome to him. To lose him has been a great loss to Sanskrit scholarship in India. He enjoyed all the blessings of a liberal education without knowing any English. Government made him a Mahamahopadhyaya and the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland made him an Honorary Member. All this was high appreciation indeed, but not high enough for a man of so much industry and so great intellectual powers.

I have already said that it is a sign of the twentieth century that the Indian princes came spontaneously and patriotically, without any impetus from outside, to start the various Sanskrit series. The four series already started I have mentioned before. But other series may also be started. Appeal should be made to the enlightened ruler of Bikaner to utilise nearly 7000 Mss. lying idle in the fort of that city. These Mss. are very well preserved in strong worm-proof almirahs with an exhaustive nominal catalogue from which any Ms. may be immediately got. It is a storehouse of codes of Smṛti, written during the Mahommedan period. It has all the books of the law codes written by Hemādri, by Toḍarmall, by Madana-Sinha, by Ananta-deva, the son of Kamalākara, by Dinakara and his son Kamalākara combined, by Mitra Misra of Bundelkhand, and so on. You get only one or two books of these valuable codes and digests in other libraries, but in Bikaner, the codes are nearly complete. Where any book is wanting the Librarian has invariably put in some Sanskrit word to mean 'missing.' The philosophical section of the library is extensive. It has works written in all times, modern, mediaeval, ancient,

and in all parts of India, especially Bengal. It has many works of unique importance, not to be found elsewhere. The library indeed long ago published a descriptive catalogue, edited by Raja Rajendralala Mitra. But it contains very summary descriptions of only 1619 Mss.

The Alwar Darbar obtained the services of Mr. Peterson to prepare a catalogue of the state collection of Mss. and it is a very useful one. There is enough material in his library to start a series.

Jodhpur has a collection of about 2000 Sanskrit Mss., well-kept in a room in the fort, where worms will not be able to ruin these works. But there is no catalogue and nothing has come out of it.

Bundi has a collection of about 2000 Mss. well-kept in a cave-like room on a broad road leading to the palace. But there is also no catalogue.

Jaipur and Rewa very carefully guarded their treasures of Mss. and never allowed strangers to use these, though very recently, I hear, they have been opened up to the vulgar gaze.

All the states of Rajputana have their own collections of ancient Mss., but they have not caught the enthusiasm of Mysore, Travancore, Baroda and Kashmir to issue series of rare Sanskrit works and thereby spread the old light in the modern world.

We are all along speaking of the Raj Libraries of Rajputana. But in Rajputana, every learned Brahmin has his collection of Mss. Every Jaina monastery has also its collection of Mss., called Bhāṇḍars. Many Cāraṇas have rich collections of Mss. In one of the Jaina Upāśrayas or monasteries in Jodhpur I found the medical work by Vopadeva still used.

Private enterprise has also done much. Since the establishment of the Printing Press in India, many many religious-minded people have undertaken the task of printing or multiplying copies of religious books, such as

the Rāmāyaṇa, the Mahā-bhārata, the Smṛtis, the Purāṇas, etc., and distribute them among learned Brahmins. Private religious bodies also did the same thing. Pandits with business habits often undertook the publication of Sanskrit works as a matter of speculation. Traders and booksellers often undertook the printing and publication of Sanskrit Mss. for profit. In some cases, valuable series of Sanskrit Texts were started, such as the Ānandaśrama series and the Kāvya-mālā series. Some confined themselves within one or two branches of Sanskrit literature according to their own choice. One published the works of the Mādhva School only; another, of Śaṅkara School only. Individuals often published books of their choice either for money or out of love for these works. But these enterprises often failed, because Sanskrit works cannot bring handsome profit within a short time. The "Pandit" of Benares, after a glorious career of 40 years, disappeared. Then it reappeared under the name of the Benares Sanskrit Series; but that also, I believe, is now moribund, if it has not disappeared. The Vizianagram series after publishing 10 or 12 works died out. The Chowkhamba series of Benares, after publishing 400 fasciculi, now appeals to the public for fresh patronage which it fully deserves. The Ārya Samāj is also doing a great lot, not only by the dissemination of the Vedic Texts among the people, but by also publishing other books in other branches of Sanskrit literature. Other religious communities and organisations, like the Jaina, the Vaiṣṇava of North and South India, have done meritorious work in publishing their sectarian literature.

But in this department of activity among the most enterprising are (1) the proprietors of the Nirṇaya Sagara Press of Bombay, (2) the Sanskrit publications by the late Jivananda Vidyasagar of Calcutta and (3) Messrs.

Motilal Banarsi Das & Co. of Lahore. The name of the Nirṇaya Sagara Press is a household word wherever Sanskrit is seriously studied, whether in India or outside India; and their accurate and cheap editions of the Sanskrit classics have been a great help in the proper study of the Śāstras as well as Śāhitya. They are an old firm; and I need not dwell much on the good work they have done and for which they have deservedly won the gratitude of scholars. Jivananda's Sanskrit series is also well-known and deserving of praise. The firm of Motilal Banarsi Das have absorbed nearly the whole of Indian and much of European book-trade on Indology. They have enlisted the co-operation of some of the best men in Europe and in India in giving to the world choice books on Indian subjects; they obtained the help of men like Dr. Thomas to publish the Vārhaspatya Sūtra, a work on economics evidently more ancient than even Kauṭilya. They entrusted men like Jolly to publish the Mānava-dharma-Sūtra and like Caland to publish the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa of the Kāpva Śākhā. The Śatapatha has two recensions,—Mādhyandina in 14 and Kāpva in 17 Kāṇḍas. The Mādhyandina was published long ago by Weber and others, but the Kāpva was not published before this; yet the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad which Śaṅkara commented upon, belongs to the Kāpva and not the Mādhyandina Śākhā. Therefore the publication of the Kāpva Śākhā will be of great importance not only to the Vedic scholars, but also to the scholars of Advaita philosophy. Another noteworthy publication of this firm is Dr. R. C. Mazumdar's work on Campā—the first publication of the Greater India Society, a body which has taken upon itself the laudable duty of making known to the intelligentsia of India, the story of what India achieved abroad. Time and space will not permit me to give details of the

work done in the field of Sanskrit by many publishers in the various provinces, who have used provincial characters and not Devanagari which has within recent years become a sort of national character for Sanskrit ; and the same apology I make for many European editions in Roman.

The great epic Mahā-bhārata is a towering wonder in the world's literature. Its bulk is extensive and it includes within its panorama practically the whole of ancient Indian life. But when the original Mahā-bhārata was composed, perhaps the art of writing was not yet invented or writing materials were very scarce. So it passed from mouth to mouth, village to village, city to city, changing everywhere according to the taste of the people hearing or reciting it. Even when writing came into vogue, different districts produced different recensions of the Mahā-bhārata. Then there were revisions. Originally, it was an epic poem ; then it became a history in the form of interlocutions. Then, as the idea of history expanded, there was expansion of the Mahā-bhārata too. In this way a poem of 2,4000 verses gradually developed into a bulky work of a lakh of verses. When the Mahā-bhārata first went to Europe, scholars there thought of collating it. With that view they collated all Mss. of the Mahā-bhārata found in Europe, and then sent it down to India for further collation. The Bhandarkar Research Institute undertook the work and called upon the Visva-Bharati to assist them. The work is proceeding slowly. The Mahā-bhārata Committee, consisting of five young scholars trained in Europe and America, is proceeding with the work slowly. I have seen only one part of it containing two chapters, and I see that the Committee has done its best to go to the bottom of the thing. They have mercilessly rejected verses not found in authentic manuscripts. They have appended a critical apparatus which is admirable. I think, the bulk of the Mahā-

bhārata will be considerably reduced. My idea is that the work has undergone five revisions. Originally it seems that it was a short work with a table of contents in two verses only—the well-known Ślokās—Duryodhano manyu-mayo mahādrumah, etc. The next revision was in the form of an epic poem with a table of contents running to 150 verses, half of which were in the 'Triṣṭubh' metre from 'Pāṇḍur jītvā bahūn deśān,' etc., to the end of the Anukramanikā chapter. The third revision was in the form of a history in interlocution, the table of contents being the first half of the Anukramanikā chapter. Then it was divided into 100 parvans—it was set by Vyāsa himself. The table of contents of this was given in the first half of the Parvasaṅgraha chapter. Then came the full-fledged Mahā-bhārata with 18 major parvans and 84836 verses, which when reduced to a unit of 32 syllables has become 100,000 verses. I offer this suggestion of mine to the Mahā-bhārata Committee for consideration for whatever it is worth. It is a great undertaking and I wish them every success. After the success of this edition of the Mahā-bhārata, the 18 Mahā-purāṇas should be subjected to the same critical method of examination. I think, that they too, have undergone several revisions ; some are revised out of existence ; some are revised out of recognition ; some encyclopaedias have been transformed into Purāṇas.

The prevalent idea that all the 18 Mahā-Purāṇas are from the pen of Vyāsa cannot be proved. The Viṣṇu-Purāṇa is by Vyāsa's father Parāśara. The Bhāgavata is by Vyāsa's son Śuka. The Mārkaṇḍeya does not speak of Vyāsa, and the Bhaviṣya does not mention him. The three encyclopaedias, Garuḍa, Nārada and Agni, have him as one of the latest interlocutors, i.e., only in the first and in the last chapters. So the idea that Vyāsa is the author of all the Purāṇas is to be given up.

The Śrī Vidyāpīṭha of Etwa, founded

by Sri Swāmī Brahmanāth Siddhāśrama, has the noble aim of making an index of all important branches of knowledge in Sanskrit, of all manuscripts in that language and in its derivatives, and all proper names and technical terms to be found in them. The Swami is no more but his disciples and admirers are sticking to the movement. It is a spontaneous Indian movement and the Indian public should look upon it with a favourable eye and, if possible, encourage it.

Another department of Oriental studies is Archaeology. I have in my address as President of the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1919, spoken of the advancement of Archaeology under the guidance of Sir John Marshall. Eight years have passed since then, they have been years of intense activity and wonderful results. During these years in the East we have the example of mixed Buddhist and Hindu culture of the fifth, sixth and seventh centuries at Pāhārpur. Nālandā has been excavated down to the ground level revealing sculptures of the best period of Indian Art. Sarnath has yielded further treasures of inestimable value; Sanchi has been thoroughly explored and a guide-book prepared for the benefit of excursionists. Excavations at Taxila have gone to the Persian strata of the place, below the Indo-Greek and the Parthian, the Mauryan and the Macedonian. On the top of all these come the ancient treasures of Harappa and Mohenjo-daro, revealing remains of something like a new culture. Who the originators of this culture were, has not yet been settled or could not properly be investigated. But we get in our ancient work like the Mahā-bhārata and the Rāmāyaṇa, and some of the old Purāṇas that the borderland of India on both sides of the Indus was inhabited by a race very different from the heroes of these epics. They would eat (the text says 'they smell of') garlic and onions, would drink camel's milk and their sexual morality was very loose.

They sold their daughters in marriage. They were people without religion. The names of these peoples were: Madra, Kekaya, Vāhlika, Sindhu and Sauvira. So from very ancient times Aryans knew that Sindhus and Sauvīras did not belong to their stock, though they often had to contract political and matrimonial alliances with them.

Thanks to Sir John Marshall, Indian Archaeology has made great progress during his incumbency in the Department, but many wonderful discoveries have been made during the same period outside India, in Gobi and Taklamakan deserts, in Java and Anam, by archaeologists of various nationalities. The discovery of a large number of Mss., objects of Buddhist worship, Buddhist flags and so on, from the cave of the thousand Buddhas in the Gobi desert, reads like a romance. The sands of these deserts have preserved fresh many palm-leaves and Chinese papers within two feet of their surface. Japan is busy with Sanskrit Mss. and their translation in the Chinese. Takakusu has projected an edition of the whole of the Chinese Tripitaka with notes and commentaries. The French in the Eastern Peninsula are bringing to the public notice relics of forgotten Hindu empires even on the borders of the Pacific. The Dutch are doing a lot in their possessions in the Indian Ocean to bring to light the remnants of ancient Hindu empires superseded centuries ago by Mahomedan conquests. All these vindicate the ubiquity of Indian culture all over Asia and discredit the audacious ignorance which pronounced that Sanskrit can afford no culture. . . .

But at the end, I think it my duty to utter a warning. At the present moment there is a large body of men who pass as Sanskrit scholars without knowing a letter of Sanskrit. There are others again who tax the brains of poor Sāstris and make big name as Oriental scholars. At the conference of Orientalists held under the Presidency of Sir Harcourt Butler in 1911, a very

great man told the august assembly that without two Śāstris at their elbows they cannot be Oriental scholars. Such Oriental scholarship should be discouraged. The Śāstris should be trained for Oriental scholarship. A historical sense should be awakened in their minds.

I often see big works on Sanskrit literature and special branches of it, compiled mainly, if not wholly, from translations of Sanskrit works in English, French, German and other European languages. They have a value. They advertise Sanskrit literature and bring profit to the authors, but translations are never reliable. Thibaut's translation of the Śāṅkara Bhāṣya was tinged with Rāmānuja's ideas, because the Śāstri at his elbow belonged to the Rāmānuja school. Dr. Deussen's translation is a little better, because he told me at the age of 48 that he had carefully read through the Bhāṣya twenty-two times and then translated it. But he wanted one thing—the Indian tradition of the interpretation of the Bhāṣya. In a similar way all translations should be regarded as unreliable and all books based on these translations should be taken at their worth.

The Chinese translations of Buddhist Sanskrit works are free translations, therefore not reliable. The Tibetan translations are too pedantically literal

and therefore often unintelligible. The original Sanskrit should be always sought for and consulted, if procurable, to cure the defects of these translations.

The Oriental scholars of Europe have done Sanskrit literature a great service by infusing a historical sense into those who are interested in it in India. But in the present day there is a tendency amongst the younger generation of India, to make the Oriental scholars of Europe their Gurus or guides in all matters relating to India. Not being in touch with the soil of India and its traditions, the interpretation of Indian life by Europeans should always be received with caution, criticism and discrimination. They should not be slavishly followed by Indians in matters relating to India. One instance will suffice. The Indian literary chronology set up by Oriental scholars of Europe, I do not think will stand. It will be not only greatly modified, but I think, should also be thoroughly revised.

With this warning I again say that my hopes have been greatly raised by the spontaneous action of the patriotic Indian states for the publication of valuable treasures of Sanskrit works and I hope that Sanskrit will not die. It may or may not prove strong enough to resist the influence of the almighty European culture, but it will certainly modify that influence to such an extent as to give it a new character.

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"... the very sound of Sanskrit words gives a prestige and a power and a strength to the race. . . . The only safety, I tell you men who belong to the lower castes, the only way to raise your condition is to study Sanskrit, and this fighting and writing and frothing against the higher castes is in vain, it does no good, and it creates fight and quarrel, and this race, unfortunately already divided, is going to be divided more and more. The only way to bring about the levelling of caste, is to appropriate the culture, education which is the strength of the higher castes. That done, you have what you want."—Swami Vivekananda.

# VEDANTA AND NEW THOUGHT

By MADELINE R. HARDING

The blossom knoweth not the fragrance sweet  
That hid within its bosom lies.  
The deeps that mirror forth the Infinite,  
Its secrets question with its sighs.

\* \* \* \* \*

Yet I forget within my heart  
Thy Throne for ever lies.

(DILIP KUMAR ROY)

These words, the beginning of a song of exquisite beauty, composed by India's well-known musician, state with wonderful precision, first the condition of those who know nothing of the Infinite Power within; and the last two beautiful lines set out the realisation of the awakened one. We can apply them equally to the teaching of the Vedanta and to New Thought. It is the method of the working out of the realisation, wherein the difference lies.

It is only as one studies the literature of India that one begins to understand these newer schools of so-called Western thought. Perhaps, as was shown in a small measure in a previous article, Christian Science, in some of its teachings, is the nearest approach to the Vedanta; yet New Thought would appear to be nearer the basic teaching of the relation of God and man, as taught in the Vedanta, for New Thought recognises the power of the Divinity *within*—the SELF of our self as the reality. Applying this realisation to all the conditions of life, New Thought claims that man may realise the fulfilment of all his desires.

The aim of the God-realisation of the Vedanta as some interpret it, appears to be to turn man's eyes Godward only, if need be to the neglect of the physical. The God-realisation in the New Thought teaching, or the realisation of the *Divinity within*, aims at making all objective things harmoni-

ous, whether it be the body, the environment, circumstances, business, finance or success in life. And this has certainly been proved to the benefit of thousands who ardently believe in the words of the Christian Bible, that God gave man dominion over all things.

While Christian Science recognises no SELF or Spirit within, declaring that Spirit or God can have no contact whatever with matter—which is the most inexplicable point in Christian Science, and which has caused more controversy than any other part of its teaching—it yet recognises power, through the action of God, to bring perfect harmony into all material conditions.

New Thought recognises the Divinity within man, the SELF of our self, all power, all knowledge; and because of this more or less concentrates on the things it wishes to bring into realisation.

Among the chief works on New Thought are some written by Orison Swett Marden. He says: "There is no philosophy or science by which a man can arrive at the success goal when he is facing the other way . . . prosperity begins in the mind and is impossible while the mental attitude is hostile to it. No one can become prosperous while he really expects or half expects to be always poor, for holding the poverty-thought keeps him in touch with poverty-producing conditions . . . that God is right inside of him and that



man literally lives, moves and has his being in Him ; that man is mighty or weak, successful or unsuccessful, harmonious or discordant, in proportion to the completeness of his conscious oneness with the Power that sustains him every minute of his existence."

Or as Ralph Waldo Trine says in that beautiful book, *In Tune With The Infinite* : "There is a Divine sequence running throughout the universe. . . . To come into harmony with it and thereby with all the higher laws and forces . . . is the secret of all success. This is to come into possession of unknown riches, into the realisation of unreamed-of powers."

Rama Tirtha, who is described by one as "a great teacher of spiritual law," in one of his wonderful lectures contained in the book, *In Woods of God-realisation*, would appear to be more in line with the Christian Science understanding. Among other points in his helpful teaching he says : "The secret is that the more you seek things the more you lose them. The more *above* the desire you are, the more you feel yourself higher than want, the objects will seek you." Also : "When you create a vacuum by rising above desire, your body becomes a vacuum. When you are in Divinity, then to you the body, the seeming ego is dead and gone ; it has vacated its place and what happens ? Every object here-about must rush up to you."

But these various schools of thought all go to show that man is beginning to realise that the ordinary orthodox Western teaching of the past has not gone deep enough. That God is not a Being of merely superior power to whom desires and petitions ascend, petitions which are often entirely out of tune with one another.

Furthermore, it appears that all these schools of thought are links in the all-embracing Truth of the Vedanta. That just as prophets and teachers and seers have ever arisen in the East, so

the great spiritual truths have their birthplace in the East, and by various and devious paths are penetrating into Western thought for practical utilization, as never before. That these newer teachings are not discoveries of the West, but that somehow we are proving the truth of the words of the Master, Jesus the Christ, when he said : "The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a grain of mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field : which indeed is the least of all seeds, but when it is grown it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof." That the universe is truly one and that it is man's thought which has placed the barriers ; which says, Eastern thought is Eastern and Western thought is Western, not realising that it is the one great Truth the world over—the mind of man alone giving it the colouring of his own mortal thought.

New Thought, as a distinct school of teaching, began to take shape about the year 1830 although "the roots of the idealistic philosophy reach back to the oldest philosophical systems of the race ; its stem made its appearance in America in the first part of the nineteenth century," following the work and writings of such thinkers as Channing, Ripley, Emerson, Browning, Hedge and others.

We read that in 1840 *The Dial* was founded with Margaret Fuller as the first Editor, and such men as Channing, Alcott, Theodore Parker, Ripley and Thoreau as contributors. Afterwards Emerson became the Editor. This journal was the official organ of the Transcendental Movement and this may be considered as the real date of the birth of the modern New Thought movement.

We learn that when the principles of Transcendentalism were stated, its critics were puzzled, but Margaret Fuller in her Memoirs states : "Transcendentalism was an assertion of the

inalienable integrity of man ; of the immanence of Divinity in instinct. . . . Transcendentalism, as viewed by its disciples, was a pilgrimage from the idolatrous world of creeds and rituals to the Temple of the Living God in the soul." It is also stated that the essence of the Transcendental Movement may be found in the essays of Emerson, particularly in his essay on the *Over-Soul*, in which is sounded the dominant note of the later New Thought ; that the broadness and catholicity of Emerson's thought has descended in a direct line to the New Thought movement of to-day, which draws upon all sources for its truth, taking its own wherever it finds it whether on Christian or on heathen ground.

Again, the same writer says : "Emerson drew largely from the fountains of ancient Greece, but the distinct flavour of Oriental idealism pervades his thought. It were as if his thought had seeped up through the deep sands of Oriental thought, rising and filling a basin of the purest Greek design, from thence bubbling and pouring forth in a way distinctively his own. In his conception of the ONE he is a Hindu, but in his expression of the Life of the Many he is filled with the true Greek spirit. In his message the Pipes of Pan may be heard playing, always accompanied by the deeper and dimmer droning worship-note of the Temple of Brahm. And this has been passed on to the New Thought—this strange mingling of the Orient and ancient Greece—the calm, serene majesty of Brahm, and the leaping, joyous, living, loving changing form of Pan."

New Thought is a movement, the extent of which it is impossible to give in figures, as it was to a great extent possible in the article on Christian Science, for instance. "New Thought is not an organisation—it is a MENTAL ATTITUDE." Therefore in putting together these few thoughts on a vast subject, it has seemed best to quote

freely from those who have devoted years to its study and who have gathered together the best from New Thought in all its forms and applications. This mental attitude has permeated teachings in all churches and amongst all sects ; yet to those very churches and sects the name *New Thought* is usually only a heresy, one of the many phases of the Anti-Christ which will come before the last days or the Second Advent of Christ, according to some of the literal interpretations of the Christian Bible.

For those who understand and apply the principles of New Thought, there are certain basic principles which are common to all branches of its teaching and which have been set out clearly in pamphlet form, from which one cannot do better than give extracts :

(1) The fundamental principle underlying all New Thought ideas is that there exists AN INFINITE AND ETERNAL PRINCIPLE OF BEING, possessing the qualities of Omnipotence, Omnipresence, and Omniscience.

(2) This Principle of Being is regarded as MIND—the Universal Mind.

(3) This Principle of Being is held to be ONE and one only, and immanent in everything in different degrees of expression and manifestation.

In contradistinction to many other schools of thought, writers on New Thought are honest enough to acknowledge their debt to other and more ancient philosophies. One says : "In these three fundamental principles of the New Thought, we find a fundamental truth of Idealistic Philosophy, as old as the history of philosophic thought. There is nothing *new* about this truth. The same thing has been said by the ancient philosophers of India, five thousand years ago ; by the philosophers of Greece, twenty-five hundred years ago ; by Berkeley, Hegel and Kant, and their followers."

(4) The New Thought reasoning from the first three principles of belief proceeds as follows : It being con-

ceded that man is an expression, emanation, or manifestation of the One Principle of Being; and that this Principle must be *immanent* in him, just as he is contained within it; it follows that its power, its presence, its mentality—its Spirit in fact—must abide within his being, limited only by his own limitations of power and ability to *express* it. Its nature being essentially *mental*, it must follow that man's power to apply and manifest its qualities must lie in the region of his own mentality—his own real power must be Mind-Power. There is no other power to be; no other place from which it may be drawn. From this arises the simple but clear definition of New Thought: The recognition, realization, and manifestation of the God in me.

(5) Proceeding from the above, New Thought holds that our mental states, attitudes, ideas, images, and actions, determine our mental and physical conditions and status. This agrees with the old Biblical saying: As a man thinketh in his heart so is he; and the equally positive statements of the Buddha that: All that we are is the result of what we have thought. . . . Not only is our character the result of our thoughts, but so also is our environment, our health, our physical condition, our degree of success and attainment. The New Thought holds with Prentice Mulford (and Swedenborg before him) that 'Thoughts are THINGS.' It holds that 'Right Thought' expressed in 'Right Actions' will enable a man to realise all of his ideals; that he may make real his ideals in this way. Health, Happiness and Prosperity belong to man by right, and may be realised by his recognition, realisation and manifestation of the Principle within him, by the proper exercise of his mental powers.

This it is claimed is all that makes

the New Thought *new*—the practical application of world-old truths. . . . "bringing into the field of practical everyday life the great truths of the past. Bringing these great truths down from the realm of idealistic dreamings and musings, the New Thought has placed them in the midst of our actual, practical, busy life, and set them to work. It has harnessed the spiritual forces, just as it has the material forces and pressed them into service in the affairs of man," etc., etc.

(6) The New Thought teaches the Brotherhood of Man as well as the Fatherhood of God. That since we are expressions and manifestations of the One Principle of Life, then indeed we are all brothers and sisters in that Life . . . and this realisation must awaken love in all hearts for all life . . . one's neighbour is one's self . . . LOVE then is the Heart of the New Thought.

(7) The New Thought teaches that man is in a stage of Spiritual Evolution pursuing the path of Eternal Progress . . . ever pressing on, and on, and on, to higher and still higher planes of existence and activity.

But this point is too vast to enlarge upon here, it embraces so much of the teachings of philosophers and sages of all ages. This path of Eternal Progress, never retrogression, is as inspiring as the optimist is in contradistinction to the pessimist.

We cannot do better than close this brief survey of this great and inspiring method of thought in the words of Ralph Waldo Trine: "Within yourself lies the cause of whatever enters into your life. To come into the full realisation of your own awakened interior powers, is to be able to condition your life in exact accord with what you would have it."

## PRACTICE OF RELIGION

BY ANANDA

PRANAYAMA

In the present article we shall deal briefly with *Prāṇāyāma*. It has been suggested that *Prāṇāyāma* is an effective means of attaining to the subtle states of the mind, and that it not only prepares the mind for serious practice of religion, but also easily leads the aspirant to superconscious states. There is, no doubt, as much truth in this suggestion as in those we discussed last month. But certain essential conditions to the success of *Prāṇāyāma* are often carelessly ignored. *Prāṇāyāma* has a glamour about it. It seems so easy of practice! And the results said to be derivable from it are indeed irresistible. The common mind is easily deluded by the prospects. We must not forget that we are considering here the case of the ordinary man, not the man of pure mind and intense *vairāgya*. *Prāṇāyāma* and such other *Yogic* practices have a tremendous fascination for a certain section of Westerners, to which many Indians also fall an easy prey. We are eager for more and more power. And who does not know that *Yoga* can confer tremendous superhuman powers? So we begin the practice, with fatal results in most cases.

We shall not describe here the different processes of *Prāṇāyāma*. We are concerned here with the possible help it can give in the preparation for earnest religious life.

What are the relations between the body and the mind? Which is the master? Does the mind control the body or the body the mind? Many different explanations have been given. But we Hindus believe that it is the mind that precedes the body and fashions and controls it, and not *vice versa*. As is the mind, so is the body. The *vāsānās* and *samskāras* are the constructive forces in body-building. Evil

thought gives an evil aspect to a man's appearance. Pure thought confers on it an angelic beauty. This is common experience. But it cannot be denied that the body also influences and changes the mind. Our food, our environments, weather, illness, all these cast their influences on the mind.

Mere external influences however cannot much affect the mind. The body and the external objects modify the mind only to a certain extent. Beyond that, it is the mind, the inner *samskāras*, that prevail. The fact is, a certain part of the mind is almost on the same plane as the body. It is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to explain how the mind and body react on each other. But we feel that a certain part of the mind is in close connection and on the same level with the body; and that if we produce the necessary changes in the body, the mind also changes in the desired direction. Hence the practice of *Prāṇāyāma* or breath-control.

Now, it has been found that the physical concomitant of pure and spiritual thought is rhythmic breathing and sometimes its complete cessation. If, therefore, we can practise rhythmic breathing and its perfect control, we may produce subtle and spiritual thoughts in the mind and eventually realise high psychical states. This seems to be a straight course. Things, however, do not happen so tamely and mechanically. *The mind revolts*. It refuses to be led by breathing tricks.

The brain and the nervous system occupy a very important position in the mechanism of our life and mind. We have mentioned the Hindu conviction that the mind moulds the body. The brain and the nervous system may be called the main and the best physiological representative of the mind. Our

predominant mental traits and tendencies, *samskāras*, not only give a peculiar mould to the grosser parts of the body, but also to the nerves and the brain. Our nerves and brain are capacitated to carry easily and perfectly only those ideas and feelings which are normal to our mind. They cannot easily convey abnormal or *super-normal* feelings and ideas. If we force them to do so, they may reluctantly obey for a time, but they will at last give way completely, and the results, physical and mental, will be disastrous.

Our mental life has to depend much on the proper functioning of the nerves and the brain. We all know what happens to a man when even a tiny screw in his brain gets loose. But we do not attach the necessary importance to the nerves. All true perceptions and knowledge, all feelings of joy and sorrow and other emotions with their various shades, all sense of power and fruition, hope, enthusiasm, purposelulness, all those that constitute the essentials of a healthy life, are possible chiefly through healthy and strong nerves. When the nerves are disturbed or diseased, or when they are overstrained, life becomes miserable. It seems dreary, joyless and aimless. It seems to be at standstill, and death seems the only relief. This is true not only of our so-called normal, worldly life, but also and in a greater degree, of the spiritual life. In the spiritual life, we have to deal with very fine perceptions, ideas, motives, impulses and emotions. Infinitely subtle are they and infinitely various are their forms. And it is no smooth sailing. We have to carefully check some and remould and nurture others. All this requires very strong and healthy nerves and brain. If we impair them in any way, even in the name of religion, we do incalculable harm to ourselves.

*Prānāyāma*, if it is done unwisely, has every chance of ruining the nerves and the brain.

We have mentioned that if we com-

pel the nerves and the brain to carry thoughts and emotions to which they are not inured, they eventually give way. When we regulate our breath and make it flow rhythmically, or when we completely hold it, we give rise to unwonted, subtle thoughts in the mind (we have already mentioned the intimate correspondence between breath and thought). These thoughts are not always pure and noble. There are many evil tendencies latent in us. They do not generally come under our observation, but they are nevertheless in the mind. When they are forced up to the level of consciousness, they run riot in the mind; and we, with our feeble self-control, can scarcely manage them. They course hot through the nerves and the brain and wreck them, and the result is often sexual degeneration. The subtle good thoughts also equally impair the brain and the nerves. For, the nerves and the brain have all along been accustomed to gross perceptions. The intensity and power of the subtle thoughts become too much for them to bear. Thus the consequences of *Prānāyāma*, in both these respects, are ruinous. It is not enough if we release subtle thoughts. We must not forget that if *Prānāyāma* wakes up the gods in us, it also wakes up the devils; and both gods and devils, when they are suddenly roused, are harmful to us.

Do we mean that *Prānāyāma* should never be practised by any one? No. *Prānāyāma* can be profitably practised only when we have been firmly established in moral character, when we have purged our mind of base desires and tendencies, when a high moral consciousness has become our normal level, when fine perceptions and emotions have become habitua<sup>l</sup> to us, and when our nerves and brain have become accustomed to carrying subtle thoughts and emotions. That is to say, strenuous uphill work must be done before *Prānāyāma* can become a beneficial practice to us.

It has been repeatedly said in our

books that *Prāṇāyāma* should never be practised except under the guidance of an expert teacher. It should never be practised seriously by one who is not observing *Brahmacharya* (continence). It will be too much for the weak nerves and brain of an incontinent person. In young age, when one is sexually pure and has moral fervour, one may benefit by a moderate practice of *Prāṇāyāma*. For then the mind is yet unformed, desires also have not

waxed strong which they do with adolescence, and the nerves and brain are fresh and healthy. A moderate practice then will have a beneficial effect.

From what we have said above, it will be clear that *Prāṇāyāma* can at best secondarily help a worldly person in attaining to that fineness of mind, which is an essential pre-requisite of true religious life.

## SRI RAMAKRISHNA AT THE COSSIPORE GARDEN

[FROM THE DIARY OF M.]

### I

Rakhal, Sasi and M. were taking a stroll along a path in the Cossipore garden. It was the evening of Thursday, the 22nd April, 1886. Sri Ramakrishna was lying ill in a room on the first floor of the house.

M : "The Master is like a child, — above the three *gunas*."

Sasi and Rakhal : "Yes, he himself said that that was his condition."

Rakhal : "He is like a tower, from the top of which everything can be seen and known but which none can reach or climb."

M : "He said that in such a condition as his, one can have a continuous vision of God. His mind is like a piece of dry wood, free from all moisture of worldliness,—it can easily catch fire."

Sasi : He described to Charu the several kinds of intelligence. The right intelligence is that by which one can attain to God. The intelligence by which one earns money, builds a home, secures a good post or becomes a lawyer, is of a very poor kind. It is like thin watery curd which only softens the

flattened rice. It is not like a thick fine variety of curd;\* only the God-knowing intelligence is like that.

M : "Ah, what a beautiful saying!"

Sasi : "Kali Tapaswi said to the Master : 'What shall I do with bliss? The Bhils also have joy, yet they are uncivilised.'"

Rakhal : "The Master replied : 'How is that? Are the joy of God and the joy of the world same? Ordinary men are absorbed in worldly pleasures. But until one has completely detached oneself from the world, one cannot taste the joy of God. In one case, the joy arises from money and sense-objects, and in the other, from the realisation of God.'"

M : "Kali has been contemplating on Buddha ; that is why he spoke of a state beyond all joy."

Rakhal : "He also spoke about Buddha to the Master. The Master said : 'Buddha was an *Avatāra*. You cannot compare your case with his.' Kali rejoined : 'But all are manifestations of Divine power. The Divine power causes both the joy of the world and the joy of God.'"

\* The reference is to the Bengali practice of taking flattened rice with curd. In order to soften the rice, a very thin, watery sort of curd is first served. When the rice has been softened, then fine thick curd is served along with sweets.

*M* : "What did the Master reply?"

*Rakhal* : "He said: 'What do you say? Do you mean that the power to procreate and the power to realise God are the same?' ". . .

The Master was sitting in his room upstairs. He had been getting worse everyday. Dr. Mahendralal Sarkar and Dr. Rajendra Datta came to see him and were sitting before him along with Narendra, Rakhal, Sasi, M., Bhavanath and other devotees.

The garden house had been rented for the residence of Sri Ramakrishna. Almost all the young disciples lived in the garden to attend on him. The householder disciples also came very often and sometimes stayed for the night. Though they were eager to serve the Master, they could not, on account of their household and office duties, make sufficient time for that purpose. The bulk of the expenses was borne by Surendra, but other devotees also contributed according to their capacity.

*Sri R* : (to Dr. Sarkar and others) "This is proving very expensive."

*Sarkar* : (pointing to the devotees) "But they are ready to bear the expenses. They are not reluctant to meet the expenses of this establishment. Now you see you require *Kanchana* (gold i.e. money)."

*Sri R* : (to Narendra) "Answer him."

But Narendra did not make any answer. Dr. Sarkar said again: "You require *Kanchana* and also *Kamini* (woman)."

*Rajendra* : "His wife prepares his diet."

*Sarkar* : "Do you see now?"

*Sri R* : (smiling) "So troublesome!"

*Sarkar* : "Without troubles, everybody would be a *Paramahansa*."

*Sri R* : "If a woman touches me, I fall ill; I feel a stinging sensation where she touches me."

*Sarkar* : "I believe you. But how can you do without woman?"

*Sri R* : "If I take a rupee in my hand, my hand gets twisted, and breathing stops. If a man uses his wealth in conducting a spiritual household,—serves God and holy men and devotees with it, there is no harm in it.

"If one lives the common deluded life with a woman, he forgets God. When one truly knows that the Mother of the universe has Herself assumed this deluding form—the form of woman, one does no more like to live the false life of the world. Only when one sincerely learns to look upon every woman as mother, does one become fit to conduct a spiritual household. None can truly realise the significance of woman without realising God."

The Master was feeling slightly better under the homoeopathic treatment. Apropos of it, Rajendra said: "You will have to practise homoeopathy, when you recover. Otherwise what is the use of living at all?"

(Laughter)

*Narendra* : "Nothing like leather!"

(Laughter)

The two doctors left in a short while.

## II

The Master said to M: "They say that one cannot do without *Kamini* and *Kanchana*. But they do not know my condition. If I happen to touch a woman, my hand gets numbed and feels like being stung. If in a friendly spirit I approach to talk with a woman, I always feel a sort of curtain hanging between her and me, which I can never cross over. If any woman enters my room when I am alone, the mood of a child at once overcomes me, and I feel her to be my mother."

M. listened amazed to these revelations of Sri Ramakrishna, sitting near his bed. At a short distance Narendra was talking with Bhavanath. Bhavanath had married lately and had been seeking for employment. He could not therefore visit the Master often. Bhavanath was about twenty-four years old. The Master felt a great anxiety for him

inasmuch as he was now entangled in the world.

Sri Ramakrishna said to Narendra : "Give him courage." Both Narendra and Bhavanath smiled to hear him. The Master said to Bhavanath : "Be a hero. Do not be taken in when she weeps behind her veil. Keep your mind firmly fixed on the Lord. Talk with her only about God."

Surendra came in. It was summer. Therefore every evening the devotees brought some flower-garlands for the Master, which he wore round his neck. Surendra was sitting silent. The Master very graciously gave him two garlands. Surendra saluted the Master and then put them on with great reverence.

### III

Hirananda, M., a few devotees and two companions of Hirananda were sitting before the Master upstairs. Hirananda was a young man from Sind. He had prosecuted his studies in a Calcutta college and afterwards gone to his native province, from where he came to see Sri Ramakrishna on hearing of his illness. The Master also had been eager to see him.

The Master pointed to Hirananda and intimated to M. by signs that the boy was very fine.

*Sri R : (to M.)* "Do you know him?"

*M :* "Yes, Sir, I do."

*Sri R : (to Hirananda and M.)* "Do you talk a little. Let me hear."

But M. remained silent. The Master said : "Is Naren here? Then call him."

Narendra came in and sat near the Master.

*Sri R : (to Narendra and Hirananda)* "Do you talk a little."

Hirananda broke silence after some time by asking Narendra : "Why does a devotee of God suffer?"

Hirananda had a very sweet voice. Whoever heard him felt that his heart was full of love.

*Narendra :* "The scheme of the universe is devilish. I could have created a better world."

*Hirananda :* "But can you feel happiness without sorrow?"

*Narendra :* "I am giving no scheme of the universe, but simply my opinion of the present scheme. But one belief may solve the difficulty. Our only refuge is in pantheism.—Everything is God. If you believe that, there is then no problem. I myself am doing everything."

*Hirananda :* "It is easy to say that."

Narendra began to recite the famous verses of Sankaracharya on Nirvana :

"I am neither the mind, nor the intellect,  
nor the ego nor the mind-stuff;  
I am neither the body, nor the changes of  
the body;  
I am neither the senses of hearing, taste,  
smell or sight,  
Nor am I the ether, the earth, the fire,  
the air;  
I am Existence Absolute, Knowledge  
Absolute, Bliss Absolute;—  
I am He, I am He.

"I am neither the *Prāna*, nor the five  
vital airs;  
I am neither the materials of the body,  
nor the five sheaths;  
Neither am I the organs of action,  
nor the objects of the senses;  
I am Existence Absolute, Knowledge  
Absolute, Bliss Absolute;—  
I am He, I am He.

"I have neither aversion nor attachment,  
neither greed nor delusion;  
Neither egotism nor envy, neither  
*Dharma* nor *Moksha*;  
I am neither desire nor objects of desire;  
I am Existence Absolute, Knowledge  
Absolute, Bliss Absolute;—  
I am He, I am He.

"I am neither sin nor virtue, neither  
pleasure nor pain;  
Nor temple nor worship, nor pilgrimage  
nor Scriptures,  
Neither the act of enjoying, the enjoyable  
nor the enjoyer;  
I am Existence Absolute, Knowledge  
Absolute, Bliss Absolute;—  
I am He, I am He.



"I have neither death nor fear of death,  
nor caste;  
Nor was I ever born, nor had I parents,  
friends and relations;  
I have neither Guru nor disciple;  
I am Existence Absolute, Knowledge  
Absolute, Bliss Absolute; --  
I am He, I am He.

"I am untouched by the senses, I am neither  
Mukti nor Knowledge;  
I am without form, without limit, beyond  
space, beyond time;  
I am in everything; I am the basis of  
the universe; everywhere am I.  
I am Existence Absolute, Knowledge  
Absolute, Bliss Absolute; --  
I am He, I am He."

*Hirananda* : "Beautiful!"

The Master hinted to Hirananda to answer this.

*Hirananda* : "It is the same whether you see a room from a corner or from the centre. Whether you say, 'O Lord, I am Thy servant,' or 'I am That,' in both cases you are perceiving God. You can enter a room through one door or many doors."

There was silence for some time. Then Hirananda requested Narendra to sing. Narendra sang the famous "Five Stanzas on the Loin-cloth" by Sankaracharya :

"The wearers of the loin-cloth\* are indeed blessed. They ever take delight in the words of Vedanta, contentedly take whatever food they get by begging and wander about with a griefless heart. Blessed and fortunate indeed are they.

"The wearers of the loin-cloth are blessed indeed. Their only shelter is the foot of the trees. Their hands are not for procuring food alone, and they spurn earthly prosperity and luxury as a dirty patched garment. Blessed and fortunate indeed are they.

"The wearers of the loin-cloth are blessed indeed. They are absorbed in their own inner joy and all their senses are tranquil. Day and night they are delighting in Brahman. Blessed and fortunate are they.

"The wearers of the loin-cloth are indeed blessed. They have transformed their body-consciousness and realised their self within

the Atman. Thus they think of neither the end nor the middle nor the without. Blessed and fortunate indeed are they.

"The wearers of the loin-cloth are indeed blessed. They ever utter the holy word-symbol of Brahman and meditate that they are Brahman itself. And thus they wander about living on alms. Blessed and fortunate indeed are they."

When Narendra sang, "Day and night they are delighting in Brahman," the Master exclaimed, "Ah!" and indicated that this was the sign of a Yogi.

Narendra sang again :

"Remember the formless receptacle of the universe, who is perfect bliss, who is the ear of the ear, the mind of the mind, the speech of speech and yet above all speech, and the life of life, who is the highest and most excellent."

*Sri R* : (to Narendra) "Sing also that song, 'Whatever is, is Thyself.'"

Narendra sang :

"I have fallen in love with Thee. Whatever is, is Thyself. Thee alone I have found to be my own. Whatever is, is Thyself.

"Thou art the abode of all and the lord of all hearts. In every heart Thou abidest. Whatever is, is Thyself.

"Whether angel or man, Hindu or Mussalman, Thou hast made as Thou hast willed. Whatever is, is Thyself.

"In the *Kaaba* or in the Hindu shrine, everywhere Thou art being worshipped. All bow their heads before Thee. Whatever is, is Thyself.

"Between the earth and the sky and the sky and the earth, wherever I look, I see only Thee. Whatever is, is Thyself.

"I thought, pondered and observed well. But I could not search out any one like Thee. Jafar now understands that whatever is, is Thyself."

When Narendra sang, "In every heart Thou abidest," the Master indicated that the Lord is in every heart as the Inner Regulator.

And when Narendra sang, "Wherever I look, I see only Thee. Whatever is, is Thyself," Hirananda said to him : " 'Whatever is, is Thyself!' Now 'Thou' 'Thou.' Not 'I', but 'Thou'."

Narendra replied: "Give me one and I will give you a million. 'Thou art I and I am Thou.' Nothing exists except I." And he recited several verses from the *Ashtāvakra Samhitā*.

to Hirananda in reference to Narendra: "He is as it were moving about with a naked sword in his hand." And to M. he said pointing to Hirananda: 'How calm! Like a serpent poisoning still before a snake-charmer, with its hood spread out!'

After a short silence the Master said

## ASHTAVAKRA SAMHITA

BY SWAMI NITYASWARUPANANDA.

कूटस्थं बोधमद्वैतमात्मानं परिभावय ।

आमासोऽहं भ्रमं मुक्ता भावं बाह्यमथान्तरम् ॥ १३ ॥

**अहं** I **आमासः** reflection (of Self) **इति** this **भ्रमं** illusion **मुक्ता** giving up **बाह्यं** external **अथ** then **आन्तरं** internal **भावं** self-modification (**च** and) **गुणा** relinquishing **कूटस्थं** immovable **बोधं** Intelligence **अद्वैतं** non-dual **आत्मानं** Self **परिभावय** meditate.

13. Meditate on the Atman as immovable, Intelligence and non-dual, having given up external<sup>1</sup> and internal self-modifications and the illusion that you are the reflected<sup>2</sup> self (individual soul).

1 *External etc.* identification of the Self with the physical and mental conditions such as, "the body is mine" etc. (external) and "I am happy" etc. (internal).

2 *Reflected etc.* finite consciousness which according to a school of Advaitins is the reflection of the Self on the mind.

देहाभिमानपाशेन चिरं बद्धोऽसि पुत्रक ।

बोधोऽहं ज्ञानखड्गेन तन्निःकृत्य सुखी भव ॥ १४ ॥

**हे** O **पुत्रक** child (**त्वं** you) **देहाभिमानपाशेन** by the trap of body-consciousness **चिरं** long **बद्धः** bound **असि** are (**अतः** so) **अहं** I **बोधः** Intelligence **इति** this **ज्ञानखड्गेन** with the sword of knowledge **तं** that **निःकृत्य** cutting off **सुखी** happy **भव** be.

14. My child, you have long<sup>1</sup> been trapped by body-consciousness. Sever the trap with the sword of the knowledge "I am Intelligence" and be happy.

[1 *Long*—i.e. from the beginning of time. It may be noted that though ignorance is without beginning, it ends with the dawn of Knowledge.]

निःसङ्गो निष्क्रियोऽसि त्वं स्वप्रकाशो निरञ्जनः ।

अयमेव हि ते बन्धः समाधिमनुनिष्ठसि ॥ १५ ॥

**त्वं** You **निःसङ्गः** unattached **निष्क्रियः** actionless **स्वप्रकाशः** self-effulgent **निरञ्जनः** without blemish **असि** are **अयं** this **एव** indeed **हि** surely **ते** your **बन्धः** bondage (**यत्** that **त्वं** you) **समाधिं** meditation **अनुतिष्ठसि** practise.

15. You are unattached, actionless, self-effulgent and without any blemish. This indeed is your bondage<sup>1</sup> that you practise Samadhi.

[1 *Bondage etc.*—The Self is really ever free and without any action. Yet we betake ourselves to Samadhi (suppression of mind) and similar other practices. Such attempts presuppose the thought that we are bound, and so long as we continue to think ourselves bound, Freedom is impossible. Ashtavakra wants us to give up this thought altogether.

For as he has said previously, one who considers oneself free is free indeed as surely as one who looks upon oneself as bound remains bound.]

त्वया व्याप्तमिदं विश्वं त्वयि प्रोतं यथार्थतः ।

शुद्धबुद्धस्वरूपस्त्वं मा गमः क्षुद्रचित्तात्मा ॥ १६ ॥

इदं This विश्वं universe त्वया by you व्याप्तं pervaded त्वयि in you प्रोतं diffused ( च and ) त्वं you यथार्थतः really शुद्धबुद्धस्वरूपः pure and conscious by nature ( असि are ) क्षुद्रचित्तात्मा little-mindedness मा not गमः attain.

16. You pervade<sup>1</sup> this universe and this universe exists<sup>2</sup> in you. You are really Pure and Conscious. Do not be small-minded.<sup>3</sup>

[1 *Pervade etc.*—The Self is the substance of the universe.

2 *Exists etc.*—The universe cannot exist without the Self as its substratum.

3 *Small-minded*—unlike your true nature described in the verse.]

निरपेक्षो निर्विकारो निर्भरः शीतलाशयः ।

अगाधबुद्धिरश्रुब्धो भव चिन्मात्रवासनः ॥ १७ ॥

( त्वं You ) निरपेक्षः unconditioned निर्विकारः immutable निर्भरः devoid of bulk and form शीतलाशयः of cool disposition अगाधबुद्धिः of unfathomable intelligence अश्रुब्धः unperturbed ( असि are अतः so त्वं you ) चिन्मात्रवासनः desiring for Intelligence alone भव be.

17. You are unconditioned, immutable, formless, unimpassioned,<sup>1</sup> of unfathomable<sup>2</sup> intelligence and unperturbed.<sup>3</sup> Desire for *Chit* alone.

[1 *Unimpassioned*—Because the heat of passions cannot reach the Self.

2 *Unfathomable*—Because *Chit* or Intelligence is above the limitations of relative knowledge.

3 *Unperturbed*—unaffected by any external or internal phenomena.]

साकारमनृतं विद्धि निराकारं तु निश्चलम् ।

एतत्तत्त्वोपदेशेन न पुनर्भवसम्भवः ॥ १८ ॥

साकारं That which has form अनृतं unreal विद्धि know निराकारं the formless, तु but निश्चलं permanent ( विद्धि know ) एतत्तत्त्वोपदेशेन by this instruction about truth पुनर्भवसम्भवः possibility of rebirth न not ( अस्ति is ).

18. Know that<sup>1</sup> which has form to be unreal and the formless<sup>2</sup> to be permanent. Through this spiritual instruction you will escape<sup>3</sup> the possibility of rebirth.

[1 *That etc.*—i.e. body etc.

2 *Formless*—i.e. the Self.

3 *Escape etc.*—The round of birth and rebirth that one goes through is solely due to one's identification of the eternal Self with body, mind, etc. and is destroyed by the knowledge of the true nature of the Self, which has been described in the preceding verses.]

यथेवाद्दशमध्यस्थे रूपेऽन्तः परितस्तु सः ।

तथेवास्मिन् शरीरेऽन्तः परितः परमेश्वरः ॥ १९ ॥

यथा As एव just आद्दशमध्यस्थे existing in a mirror रूपे in an image अन्तः within परितः without तु and सः that ( आद्दशः mirror वत्ते exists ) तथा so एव just अस्मिन् in this शरीरे in the body अन्तः inside परितः outside ( च and ) परमेश्वरः the Supreme Lord ( वत्ते exists.)

19. Just as a mirror exists within and without the image reflected in it, even so the Supreme Lord exists inside and outside this body.

[The idea is : The image in the mirror has no existence of its own. Only the mirror exists and the image exists through the existence of the mirror. Even so, body, mind, etc. have no independent existence. It is only by being superimposed on the Self that they appear to exist. Just as the reflection cannot affect the mirror, so body, mind, etc. cannot affect the Self.]

एकं सर्वगतं व्योम बहिरन्तर्यथा घटे ।

नित्यं निरन्तरं ब्रह्म सर्वभूतगणे तथा ॥ २० ॥

यथा As एकं the same सर्वगतं all-pervading व्योम ether घटे in a jar बहिः outside अन्तः inside ( च and वत्ते exists ) तथा so नित्यं eternal निरन्तरं all-pervasive ब्रह्म Brahman सर्वभूतगणे in all things ( वत्ते exists ).

20. As the same all-pervading ether is inside and outside a jar, even so the eternal, all-pervasive Brahman exists in all things.

## CHAPTER II

### THE DISCIPLE'S JOY AT SELF-REALISATION

जनक उवाच ।

अहो निरञ्जनः शान्तो बोधोऽहं प्रकृतेः परः ।

एतावन्तमहं कालं मोहेनैव विदुम्बितः ॥ १ ॥

जनकः Janaka उवाच said :

अहो O अहं I निरञ्जनः spotless शान्तः calm प्रकृतेः of Nature परः beyond बोधः Consciousness ( आस्मि am ) अहं I एतावन्तं this much कालं time मोहेन by illusion एव only विदुम्बित duped ( आसम् was ).

Janaka said :

1. O, I am spotless,<sup>1</sup> tranquil,<sup>2</sup> pure consciousness and beyond Nature. All<sup>3</sup> this time I have been mocked by illusion.<sup>4</sup>

[Having attained spiritual illumination through the instructions of Ashtavakra, Janaka now expresses his joy of Self-realisation in the following verses.

<sup>1</sup> Spotless - free from all attributes.

<sup>2</sup> Tranquil - beyond any change.

<sup>3</sup> All etc. - Until I received instructions from my Guru.

<sup>4</sup> Illusion - i.e. of identifying the Self with body, mind, etc.]

यथा प्रकाशयाम्येको देहमेतं तथा जगत् ।

अतो मम जगत्सर्वमथवा न च किञ्चन ॥ २ ॥

यथा As अहं I एकः alone एतं this देहं body प्रकाशयामि illumine तथा so जगत् universe ( प्रकाशयामि illumine ) अतः therefore सर्व all जगत् universe मम mine अथवा or च certainly किञ्चन anything ( मम mine ) न नः.

2. As<sup>1</sup> I alone reveal this body, even so do I reveal this universe. Therefore<sup>2</sup> mine is all this universe, or verily nothing<sup>3</sup> is mine.

<sup>1</sup> As etc. - Without the light of the Self, the body and the universe, being material, could not be revealed.

<sup>2</sup> Therefore etc. - Because the light of the Self manifests the universe and thus makes it exist.

<sup>3</sup> Nothing etc. - Because from the absolute standpoint, the universe is non-existent.]

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### In This Number

The present issue opens with a facsimile of Swami Vivekananda's handwriting. To many, seeing with the eye of love, this may prove precious. The occasion of the composition of the poem also may be noted . . . *Unpublished Letters of Swami Vivekananda* continues as inspiring as ever. May we note the Swami's attitude towards occult creeds. Oh for straightness in religion! . . . *Sri Ramakrishna, the significance of His Life and Teachings* is translated from an unpublished Bengali writing of SWAMI VIVEKANANDA. The birthday anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna falls this year on the 13th March. . . Our article *The Dream of a New Perfection*, will, let us hope, induce some at least to dream nobly. Is the ideal indicated too Utopian? But perhaps there is no castle so strong as the castle in the air. . . This month's instalment of the *Notes of Conversations with Swami Turiyananda* depicts the Swami as reconciling dualism and monism from the standpoint of practical spirituality. "The sweet bread will always taste sweat whichever way it is eaten." To be absorbed in God and forget everything else is all that counts, not isms. . . *Spiritual Implications of Mayavada* by DR. MAHENDRANATH SIRCAR, M.A., Ph. D. (a paper read at the Lahore Oriental Conference last November) is terse and deep. We invite our readers to read it with serious attention. Dr. Sircar is Professor of Philosophy at the Sanskrit College, Calcutta, and is the author of two excellent books on Vedanta, one of which was reviewed in *Prabuddha Bharata* last December . . . *The Education of Indian Women* by SISTER NIVEDITA was written by her some 20 years back. But her observations still hold good. The Sister needs no intro-

duction at our hands. But perhaps it is necessary to mention that she had the inestimable advantage of assimilating the best thoughts of both India and the West, and that her pronouncements on Indian ideals and institutions should, therefore, recommend themselves even to the ultra-moderns. The present article forms a chapter of a book by the Sister to be soon published . . . *Sanskrit Culture in Modern India—II* by MAHAMAHOPADHYAYA HARAPRASAD SHASTRI, M.A., C.I.E., HON. D. LITT. will be, we dare say, read with great interest and profit by our readers. How dazzlingly the learned writer reveals the richness of the Sanskrit literature and culture! It uplifts and fills us with hope. Indeed it was a great mistake to relegate Sanskrit culture to a secondary position in our educational system. Only a few days before his passing, Swami Vivekananda deplored this terrible mistake of our early reformers. According to him, this has set back the progress of India by about 50 years. But there is yet hope. Hindusthani may be made the *lingua franca* of India for common purposes. But only Sanskrit can be the all-India or all-Hindu language for the cultural life. Alas, very few think of that. A nation should not only have a geographical integrity and a state language, but also a common culture and a language and literature embodying that culture. . . MADAME R. HARDING writes in this issue on *Vedanta and New Thought*. Last March she wrote on *Vedanta and Christian Science*. Mrs. Harding is an English lady, a Londoner, at present on a visit to India. She has been long interested in Indian wisdom, especially, in Vedanta. New thought appears to owe much and directly to Vedanta. Emerson who is considered to be one of the originators of the movement, was

deeply soaked in *Vedantic ideas*. Here is a passage from his journal: "I owed my friend and I owed— a magnificent day to the Bhagavat Gita. It was the first of books; it was as if an empire spoke to us, nothing small or unworthy, but large, serene, consistent, the voice of an old intelligence which in another age and another climate had pondered and thus disposed of the same questions which exercise us. Let us now go back and supply minute criticisms to it, but cherish the venerable oracle." Some of the later leaders of the movement also were beholden to Vedanta. We are told that some of them attended the classes of Vedantic teachers in America. . . . In *Practice of Religion* ANANDA deals this month with Pranayama. An important subject. Inquiries are plentiful about this particular practice, and cries for help in cases of misadventure are equally plentiful. Even this brief treatment may prove somewhat helpful. . . . *Sri Ramakrishna at the Cossibore Garden* is translated from the Diary of M. (a direct disciple of the Master), as published by him in Bengali. The discussion between Hirananda and Narendra (Swami Vivekananda) on dualism vs. monism is edifying. (Hirananda belonged to the New Dispensation Church of Keshab Chandra Sen. He was highly spiritual and became a great moral and spiritual force in Sind where his memory is still highly revered.) Readers will note that the same topic has been discussed also by Swami Turivananda in his conversations as published this month. . . . *Ashtavakra Sambhita* by SWAMI NITYASWARUPANANDA, how simple are the remedies prescribed by Ashtavakra for curing the 'malady of the world,' the illusion of life! How open and straight! Great truths, as has been said, are always the simplest. No weakening mysticism, no intermediaries and no this and that. The world is in urgent need of such straight, bold and open teachings.

### The Thought of Mahatma Gandhi

A very interesting and thought-provoking book (*Economics of Khaddar* by Richard B. Gregg. S. Ganesan, Triplicane, Madras) has been lying on our table for some time. The book is, as its title implies, an exposition of the economics of *khaddar*. Facts and figures have been quoted carefully and elaborately, and the conclusion arrived at is the same as Mahatma Gandhi's. The writer's arguments, it must be admitted, are forceful. But the book's main interest, for our purpose, does not lie in the arguments themselves but in the outlook underlying the arguments. If we admit that India is not to be industrialised in the modern sense, the author's arguments are well-nigh irrefutable. But if we hold that India must become industrial in the Western sense, the book at once loses its interest and value. And it is our conviction that India can no longer afford to follow her ancient economic policy.

At least two reasons force us to this conclusion,—the logic of world-tendencies, and the needs of human nature.

India cannot live isolated from the world. And she must live before she can follow a non-violent spiritual ideal. The question of physical existence has assumed a formidable aspect in India. Adequate means of effectively answering it must be found without delay. Mahatmaji's answer is *charka* and *khaddar*. It is argued that they can successfully compete with the machine and its products. Unfortunately the conditions attached to this success make too large claims on prevailing tendencies and human nature. The justification and superiority of machines lie not so much in meeting the internal needs of a country as in invading and capturing foreign markets. Mainly through extensive foreign commerce, a nation receives the highest return of its labour and expended energy. Of course foreign trade means competition and exploitation and these are bad. But

obviously India cannot afford to be overfastidious. Too high an ideal in this respect will only debilitate her and perpetuate her economic and political slavery. India must develop foreign trade. This is necessary for the efficient management of the state and its functions. The material prosperity of a nation depends mainly on extensive commerce which alone can yield necessary income to the state. The state can scarcely hope to derive enough income from an India plying cottage industries. A modern state has many expensive functions to fulfil. India, so backward in every respect, will have to engage in many costly nation-building activities. She will have to make herself efficient in many respects within a very short time. Her education is lamentably neglected. Sanitation is almost nil. Diseases are doing havoc in the villages. There are practically no industries. To rehabilitate and reconstruct all these and many more, and to successfully stem the tide of foreign exploitation and recover the home markets, the state will have to undergo huge expenses. A modern state must be well-equipped with army, navy, air force and other accessories. India's geographical position requires strong military protection. Can India hope to meet these mountain-high expenses, unless she can derive a profuse income from her industries and foreign trade?

The world does not show any sign of turning saintly in course of a century or two. If India does not learn to defend herself against the growing greed of nations, she will soon perish. If she is to live and fulfil her spiritual mission among men, she *must* modernise herself,—save herself and defend herself. She must stoop to conquer. The low spiritual condition of large masses of mankind compels her to follow the lower course for a time. We know there is much that is evil in modernism. But we also know we have to pass through it,—we cannot evade it. We must in-

dustrialise ourselves,—the sooner the better. We must capture not only our home markets, but also foreign markets. We cannot sit idle, nor can we follow the non-violent industrial policy of *khaddar*, however moral it may appear. The world is not yet prepared for such superior ideals in industry. It is yet too gross. Probably a day will come when the nations of the world will forget all cravings for earthly things, and will not invade other countries and seek to exploit them. It is then that these innocent industrial policies will find a congenial atmosphere to thrive in. At present the atmosphere is too thick and impure. Sturdier methods must be adopted now. We want enormous wealth and enormous power; and for these, extensive trade in and outside India and titanic industry. Mahatma Gandhi's *khaddar* policy is too inadequate for our purpose. Some in the West may applaud it, because in their own countries they have a surfeit of earthly prosperity. They surely would be benefited by Mahatmaji's gospel. Not India. India at present wants at least a fraction of that earthly prosperity which seems to have satiated the West.

The fact is, India has been for a long time merged in *tamas*, inertia. Mahatmaji forgets this crucial fact. A *tāmasika* man or race cannot all at once rise to the level of *sattva*, spiritual other-worldliness. The intermediate stage of *rajas*, activity and worldly enjoyment, must be covered first. India, therefore, must have a tremendous influx of *rajas*. There must be unceasing activity on all sides, in all fields of life. Industry, politics, economics, culture, education, art, science, religion, all must flourish vigorously. People will necessarily indulge in luxury. They must learn to enjoy the best and the finest of earthly things. Only then will they feel the urge of rising beyond them to the spiritual level. Therefore an all-round activity must be encouraged in the country. Mahatmaji's policy and philosophy, we regret to say, rather deters

than accelerates this. Not only his economic policy, but his entire outlook on life is too ascetic and narrow to meet the requirements of present-day India. They are good only for a certain section of people. It is almost a sacrilege to seek to impose a narrow, one-sided philosophy on an entire nation of 300 millions of people.

The present age in India requires the formulation of a synthetic philosophy of life and action, which will comprehend all the healthy impulses and aspirations of the human mind, and yet lead them and point to an ideal which is supramundane, spiritual, cosmic. The ideal has to be formulated and made living and invincible through the *tapasyā* and realisation of a dynamic spiritual personality. So far as we know, these conditions are fulfilled completely in the life and teachings of Swami Vivekananda. We showed it in our last month's editorial. When will India learn to walk in his footsteps?

### The Giant of Feeling

The supreme greatness of Swami Vivekananda lay in the wonderful combination of head and heart that his character embodied. Of his perfect understanding of the essential problems of human life, the posterity will know better than we do now, for it is only with the passing of days that the deep significance of his message is being increasingly appreciated. But without the large heart that he possessed, the Swami would not have been what he was. Behind his dazzling virility there lay a heart as soft as any woman's. We shall present our readers with an account of a conversation of Swami Turiyananda, a brother-disciple of Swami Vivekananda, which clearly brings out this inner aspect of Swamiji's life. We are indebted for the account to *The Morning Star* of Patna.

It was on a summer evening at Benares. Swami Turiyananda (or Hari Maharaj as he was generally called) was narrating his meeting with Swamiji

at the Abu Road Station, before Swamiji's first departure for America. Hari Maharaj said that he vividly remembered some remarks made by Swamiji at that time, which he said were still ringing in his ears with their exact words and accents and the deep pathos with which they were uttered. Swamiji said to Hari Maharaj: "Hari Bhai, I have not been able to understand anything of your so-called religion." Then with an expression of deep sorrow in his countenance and an intense emotion shaking his body, Swamiji placed his quivering hand on his heart, and added: "But my heart has expanded very much and I have learnt to feel. Believe me, I feel intensely indeed." His voice was choked with an ecstasy of feeling; he could say no more. For a time, profound silence reigned and tears rolled down his cheeks.

Narrating this incident, Hari Maharaj also was overtaken by a similar feeling. He sat silent for a while with his eye-lids heavy with concealed tears. After heaving a deep sigh, Hari Maharaj said: "Can you imagine what thought passed through my mind on hearing the Swami? Are not these, I thought, the very words and feelings of Buddha? And it reminded me how Swamiji long before had gone to Bodhi Gaya to meditate on the *Vajrasana* under the Bodhi tree and how he had a vision in which he saw Lord Buddha enter into his body. I could clearly perceive that the sufferings of humanity were pulsating in the heart of Swamiji,—his heart was a huge cauldron in which the sufferings of mankind were being boiled in order to prepare a healing balm."

Swami Turiyananda narrated another incident which happened after Swamiji's return from America. The scene, as far as it could be remembered, was in the well-known house of Balaram Bose at Baghbazar, Calcutta, where Swamiji was putting up for some time. Hari Maharaj said: "I came to see Swamiji and found him walking alone



on the veranda with a leonine gait, lost in deep thought so much so that he did not perceive my arrival. I passed gently and at last stopped that I might not intrude upon his sacred thoughts. After sometime, Swamiji began to hum a celebrated pathetic song of Mirabai and tears rolled down his cheeks. He stopped and leant on the railings, hiding his face with his hands. His voice became more distinct and he sang: "Oh, nobody understands my sorrow!" He repeated the burden of the song several times: "Oh, nobody understands my sorrow!" The sad strains and Swamiji's profound mood seemed to affect even the objects around him, and the whole atmosphere began to vibrate with the sad melody: "No one but the sufferer knows the pangs of sorrow." His voice pierced my heart like an arrow, moving me to tears. I could hardly understand the cause of Swamiji's sorrow at first, and it made me all the more uneasy. But soon it

flashed in my mind that it was nothing else than that monster of feeling which had caused him to shed many a hot tear in solitude, which the world would never know."

Then placing his radiant eyes full on the audience, Hari Maharaj exclaimed: "Young men, do you think his tears would go in vain? Never, if you are not a mass of fire-bricks and cannot catch fire. Blessed is he who would lay down his all at the feet of Swamiji and would do his work. His work would go on in spite of everything. If you cannot avail of this golden opportunity of consecrating your life by doing his work, others would come. Every hot breath that came out of his mighty heart, every drop of tear that he shed for the country, will surely bring into existence bands of heroes who would own nothing, fear nothing and shake the world with their thought and deed."

## REVIEW

THE GITA AND SPIRITUAL LIFE. By D. S. Sarma, M.A. Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras. 132 pp. Price wrapper Rs. 1-2-0.

In this small volume have been gathered together five lectures delivered by the author on various occasions in the city of Madras. The first lecture gives its name to the book. The other four lectures are: The Mystic Way of the Gita, The Gita and Yoga-Siddhi, What the Gita does not Teach, and The Experience of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa (which was reproduced in *Prabuddha Bharata* last year). The author is undoubtedly well-versed in the Gita on which he appears to have bestowed his best attention. He can also express himself very well. The book, though small and necessarily of a scrappy nature, is yet worth serious study, provide as it does also many comparisons between Indian and Western thought.

We shall specially notice his fourth chapter—*What the Gita does not Teach*. He says that "the Gita does not give us all

that is great in the Hindu religious thought. It does not specifically develop the highest cardinal virtues, namely, satyam and ahimsa. It does not describe the path of nature mysticism and the path of human love among the ways of approach to God. And it rarely leads up to the Himalayan heights of Yagnavalkya's teaching in the Upanishads." We do not think that the criticism is really justified. Hinduism has never over-emphasised the mere formal observance of ahimsa. But real ahimsa it has always preached. Ahimsa flows from the perennial source of the vision of the unity of all beings. And does not Gita again and again preach this vision,—the spirit of sama-drishti? Does not nature mysticism form part of that devotional aspect of the Gita, in which one is asked to see Divinity immanent in all nature? In our opinion the Visvarupa-darsanam is the highest culmination of nature mysticism, in which nature appears as Person. And what does the author mean by the tender note of domestic love being absent from the symphony of the Gita? He quotes

Yagnavalkya's utterance to his wife as an offset to this supposed deficiency of the Gita. But if to love one's wife and children is to be regarded as a path of approach to God, why did then Yagnavalkya renounce his wife? Yagnavalkya's words should not be construed in the sense in which the author has done. It is the Divinity in *everything* that Yagnavalkya said was dear to our heart. The domestic relations, sweet or bitter, were not considered at all. By these words Yagnavalkya did not at all preach domestic relations as a pathway to God. Lastly, we must say that we have never felt the absence of the highest note of Advaita in the Gita nor of the spirit of truth. It is ridiculous to expect an enthusiastic search for truth in politics, science and social matters to be a part of the teachings of the Gita.

**PLOTINUS ON THE BEAUTIFUL.** Published by *The Shrine of Wisdom, Aahlu, n Hermon Hill, London, E. 11.* 11 pp. Price 1s.

The booklet is a translation made by the editors of *The Shrine of Wisdom* of Plotinus's Ennead I, Book vi. Plotinus was born in Egypt in 205 A.D. and laboured from 241 onwards in Rome, where he gained many followers and admirers and died in Lower Italy in 270. The writings of Plotinus were arranged by his pupil Porphyry and published in six Enneads. These are the primary and classical document of Neoplatonism. Plotinus was, as we say, a man of realization: he realised ecstasy (Samadhi) several times in his life and his philosophy has much affinity with Hindu philosophy and was most probably influenced by it, for Egypt, as is well-known, was in those days

a centre of the admixture of Oriental and Occidental thought.

In the portion under review, Plotinus discusses the nature of beauty in the sensible and the supersensible and traces it to a single source, Beauty itself. Plotinus dismisses with cogent arguments the explanation that beauty in all things consists in their being synthetical and harmoniously proportioned. His own explanation is that things are beautiful through their participation in "form" which is the reflection of the Divine Reason itself. It is not the *matter* of things that contributes to beauty but the *form* derived from our soul. The inner virtues are beautiful because they belong to the soul; and the soul is beautiful because it is pure. Just as gold when mixed with dust loses its lustre but when purified of it, regains it, even so the soul when attached to body and its desires, becomes ugly, but being free from them, becomes beautiful, and is at last assimilated into Beauty Itself, the Divine Reason which is also Goodness and Intelligence.

Plotinus's ideas are similar to those of Indian sages. For they also declared that the joys of things are reflections of the Infinite Joy which is God, and God has been called *Satyam, Sivam, Sundaram*—the True, the Good and the Beautiful. "He shining, everything shines." The way to the realisation of the Beautiful is also the same as that suggested by Indian sages,—self-purification, *Nivritti*—turning away from the things of the senses, and then transcending the intelligible ideas, *i.e.*, the mind, till one is absorbed in the Beautiful Itself.

This nicely got-up brochure is complete in itself and full of excellent ideas. The translation has been done well.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### The Temple of the Universal Spirit, Ananda Ashrama. U. S. A.

The following account of the dedication ceremony of the Temple of the Universal Spirit at Ananda Ashrama, La Crescenta, Calif., U. S. A., appeared in *Message of the East*, the organ of the Ashrama:

The final dedication of the Temple of the Universal Spirit at Ananda-Ashrama on Sunday, October 21st, marked a culminating

moment in the fruitful achievement of Swami Paramananda during his twenty-two years in America. There had been two preliminary consecration Services, one in July and one in August, to make possible the use of the Temple itself and the Out-door Auditorium, though both were far from completion. The present dedication was of the finished Temple. The date chosen was the time of the great Festival of Divine Mother

in India, the salient feature of which is the reconciliation of warring factions. At the close of this Festival each one embraces not only his friends, but his enemies also. There must be no ill will toward any one, otherwise the blessing of the Festival is lost. It is one of the deepest traditions of India and one specially fitting to imbed in the nascent tradition of this new Temple of the Universal Spirit which stands above anything for universality and tolerance.

The Ashrama has already established a name for its unfailing welcome to all sects and creeds, nationalities and races. The Temple is placing a new and stronger accent on this universal note. It contains shrines to all the great world religions and its windows show pictures in stained glass of Temples, shrines and pagodas of Egypt, Greece, Japan, China; Christian, Buddhist, Jewish, Mahommedan and Hindu.

On Sunday, the twenty-first, six hundred people climbed the steep slopes of the Sierra Madre foothills to take part in the two Services. The parking places of the Ashrama were crowded with cars and the winding stone-edged paths of the gardens were filled with enthusiastic visitors. All were loud in their praises of the Temple with its large patio, its curved arched cloisters and the marvellous views visible through them. The Temple was crowded to its doors for the morning Service, some being unable to get in. In the afternoon over a hundred people were obliged to content themselves with seats in the patio or outside the windows.

Swami Paramananda spoke at both Services. In the morning he lay stress on the unbounded scope of the Temple, expressing the hope that people of all faiths and all races would find a home there and closing with the statement that it had been built with loving hands "for the good of many and for the happiness of many." He told how the Ashrama workers had toiled not only through long days, but also through whole nights to make it ready, how the finishing touches had been laid upon it by the gifted members of the Ashrama. One had decorated the walls, another the wood work, still another had installed all the electric fixtures which are among the beautiful features of the new building; another had woven the curtains which are drawn across the sanctuary when no service is going on. Others had hung the doors, put in the hardware and done all the carpentry; while one had written the

words and music for an anthem which was sung at both Services.

In the afternoon the Swami dwelt on the primal need of universal tolerance, void of condescension or compromise, to heal the wounds of the world and to cure its evils. Everyone was deeply impressed by his words and went away with a larger point of view and an expanded love of humanity.

#### R. K. Mission Sevashrama, Brindaban

We have gone through the report of work of the Sevashrama for the year 1927. The importance of such an institution in a place of pilgrimage like Brindaban where, besides thousands of pilgrims flocking all the year round, many devout men and women settle down to live in retirement, can hardly be overstated. The activities of the Ashrama may be summarised under three heads:— (i) Indoor Hospital Relief—the total number being 269; (ii) Outdoor Hospital Relief—altogether 27,006 patients being treated with medicine; and (iii) House to House Relief—twelve persons being treated with medicine and nursed at their own houses, and four helpless *Pardanashin* ladies being helped with Rs. 2/- per month for their subsistence. It is needless to say that an institution of this type should be maintained in a more efficient state and better equipped to serve a greater number of both indoor and outdoor patients. It therefore earnestly appeals to the sympathetic public to remove the following crying needs and thus earn the gratitude of the suffering humanity:—(I) The construction of an Outdoor Dispensary Building at a cost of Rs. 10,000. (II) The construction of an additional general ward for male indoor patients at a cost of Rs. 7,000. (III) The construction of two separate infection wards, for cholera and smallpox, costing Rs. 4,000 each. (IV) The construction of a guest house at a cost of Rs. 5,000. (V) The erection of an embankment on the Jumna by the site of the Sevashrama and a compound wall costing Rs. 10,000.

Contributions, however small, towards any of the above-mentioned purposes or towards the maintenance of the Sevashrama, will be thankfully received and acknowledged by (i) *The President, The Ramakrishna Mission, P.O. Belur-math, Dt. Howrah, Bengal*, or (ii) *The Hon'y. Secretary, The Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama, Brindaban, Dt. Multra, U. P.*

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“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।”

“Arise! Awake! And stop not till the Goal is reached.”

## UNPUBLISHED LETTERS OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

X

(To an English Disciple)

SWITZERLAND,  
8th August, 1896.

\* \* \* \* \* Be at rest. It is unswerving love and perfect unselfishness that conquers everything. We Vedantists in every difficulty ought to ask the subjective questions, “Why do I see this?” “Why can I not conquer this with love?”

\* \* \* \* \* Great work requires great and persistent effort for a long time. Neither need we trouble ourselves if a few fail. It is in the nature of things that many should fall, that troubles should come, that tremendous difficulties should arise, that selfishness and all the other devils in the human heart should struggle hard, when they are about to be driven out by the fire of spirituality. The road to Good is the roughest and steepest in the universe. It is a wonder that so many succeed, no wonder that so many fall. Character has to be established through a thousand stumbles.

I am much refreshed now. I look out of the window and see the huge glaciers just before me and feel that I am in the Himalayas. I am quite calm. My nerves have regained their accustomed strength; and little vexations like those you write of, do not touch me at all. How shall I be disturbed by this child's play? The whole world is mere child's play—preaching, teaching, and all included. “Know him to be the Sannyasin, who neither hates nor desires.” And what is there to be desired in this little mud-puddle of a world, with its ever-recurring misery, disease and death? “He who has given up all desires, he alone is happy.”

“This rest, eternal, peaceful rest, I am catching a glimpse of now in this beautiful spot. “Having once known that the Atman alone, and nothing else, exists, desiring what, or for whose desire, shall you suffer misery about the body?”

I feel as if I had my share of experience, in what they call "work." I am finished, I am longing now to get out. "Out of thousands, but one strives to attain the Goal. And even of those who struggle hard, but few attain ; for the senses are powerful, they drag men down."

"A good world," "a happy world," and "social progress," are all terms equally intelligible with "hot ice" or "dark light." If it were good, it would not be the world. The soul foolishly thinks of manifesting the Infinite in finite matter, Intelligence through gross particles ; but at last it finds out its error and tries to escape. This going-back is the beginning of religion, and its method, destruction of self, that is, love. Not love for wife or child or anybody else, but love for everything else except this little self. Never be deluded by the tall talk, of which you will hear so much in America, about "human progress" and such stuff. There is *no progress* without corresponding digression. In one society there is one set of evils, in another, another. So with periods of history. In the Middle Ages, there were more robbers, now more cheats. At one period there is less idea of married life, at another more prostitution. In one, more physical agony, in another, a thousandfold more mental. So with knowledge. Did not gravitation already exist in Nature before it was observed and named? Then what difference does it make to know that it exists? Are you happier than the Red Indians?

The only knowledge that is of any value is to know that all this is humbug. But few, very few, will ever know this. "Know the Atman alone, and give up all other vain words." This is the only knowledge we gain from all this knocking about the universe. This is the only work, to call upon

mankind to "Awake, arise, and stop not till the goal is reached." It is renunciation, *Tyaga*, that is meant by religion, and nothing else.

*Isvara* is the sum total of individuals, yet He Himself also is an individual in the same way as the human body is a unit, of which each cell is an individual. *Samashti*, or the Collective, is God. *Vyashiti*, or the component, is the soul or *Jiva*. The existence of *Isvara*, therefore, depends on that of *Jiva*, as the body on the cell, and *vice versa*. *Jiva* and *Isvara* are co-existent beings. As long as the one exists, the other must also. Again, since in all the higher spheres, except on our earth, the amount of good is vastly in excess of the amount of bad, the sum total, or *Isvara*, may be said to be All-good, Almighty, and Omniscient. These are obvious qualities, and need no argument to prove, from the very fact of totality.

*Brahman* is beyond both of these, and is not a *state*. It is the only unit not composed of many units. It is the principle which runs through all, from a cell to God, and without which nothing can exist. Whatever is real, is that principle, or *Brahman*. When I think "I am *Brahman*," then I alone exist. It is so also when *you* so think, and so on. Each one is the whole of that principle. . . .

A few days ago, I felt a sudden irresistible desire to write to K. Perhaps he was unhappy and thinking of me. So I wrote him a warm letter. To-day from the American news, I see why it was so. I sent him flowers gathered near the glaciers. . . . Love never dies. The love of the father never dies, whatever the children may do or be. He is my child. He has the same or more share in my love and help, now that he is in misery.

## **HINDUS AND CHRISTIANS**

BY SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

Of the different philosophies, the tendency of the Hindu is not to destroy, but to harmonize everything. If any new idea comes into India we do not antagonize it, but simply try to take it in, to harmonize it, because this method was taught first by our prophet, God incarnate on earth, Sri Krishna. The Incarnation of God preached himself first: "I am the God incarnate, I am the inspirer of all books, I am the inspirer of all religions." Thus we do not reject any.

There is one thing which is very dissimilar between us and Christianity, something which we never taught. That is the idea of salvation through Jesus' blood, or cleansing by any man's blood. We had our sacrifices as the Jews had. Our sacrifices mean simply this: Here is some food I am going to eat, and until some portion is offered to God, it is bad; so I offer the food. This is the pure and simple idea. But with the Jew the idea is that his sin lie upon the lamb, and let the lamb be sacrificed and he go scot-free. We never developed this beautiful idea in India and I am glad we did not. I, for one, would not come to be saved by such a doctrine. If anybody would come and say: "Be saved by my blood," I would say to him: "My brother, go away; I will go to hell; I am not a coward to take innocent blood to go to heaven; I am ready for hell." So that doctrine never cropped up amongst us, and our prophet says that whenever evil and immorality prevail on earth, He will come down and support His children; and this He is doing from time to time and from place to place. And wherever on earth you see an extraordinary holy man trying to uplift humanity, know that He is in him.

So you see that is the reason why we never fight any religion. We do

not say that ours is the only way to salvation. Perfection can be had by everybody, and what is the proof? Because we see the most holy man in all countries, good men and women everywhere, whether born in our faith or not. Therefore it cannot be held that ours is the only way to salvation. "Like so many rivers flowing from different mountains, all coming and mingling their waters in the sea, all the different religions taking their births from different standpoints of fact, all come unto Thee." This is a part of the child's everyday prayer in India. With such everyday prayers, of course, such ideas as fighting because of differences of religion are simply impossible. So much for the philosophers of India. We have great regard for all these men, especially this prophet, on account of his wonderful catholicity in harmonizing all the preceding revelations.

Then the man who is bowing down before the idol. It is not in the same sense as you have heard of the Babylonian and the Roman idolatry. It is peculiar to the Hindus. The man is before the idol and he shuts his eyes and tries to think: "I am He. I have neither life nor death; I had neither father nor mother; I am not bound by time or space; I am existence infinite, bliss infinite and knowledge infinite; I am He, I am He. I am not bound by books or holy places, or pilgrimages, or anything whatsoever; I am existence absolute, bliss absolute; I am He, I am He." This he repeats and then says: "O Lord, I cannot conceive Thee in myself; I am a poor man." Religion does not depend upon knowledge. It is the soul itself, it is God, not to be attained by simple book-knowledge or powers of speech. You may take the most learned man you have and ask him to think of spirit as spirit, - he cannot. You may imagine

spirit, he may imagine spirit. It is impossible to think of spirit without training. So no matter how much theology you may learn,—you may be a great philosopher and a great theologian,—but the Hindu boy would say: "Well, that has nothing to do with religion." Can you think of spirit as spirit? Then alone all doubt ceases, and all crookedness of the heart is made straight. Then only all fears vanish and all doubtings are for ever silent when man's soul and God come face to face.

A man may be wonderfully learned in the Western sense, yet he may not know the A B C of religion. I would tell him that. I would ask him: "Can you think of the spirit as such? Are you advanced in the science of the soul? Have you manifested your own soul above matter?" If he has not, then I say to him: "Religion has not come to you; it is all talk and book and vanity." But this poor Hindu sits before that idol and tries to think that he is That, and then says: "O Lord, I cannot conceive Thee as spirit, so let me conceive Thee in this form;" and then he opens his eyes and sees this form, and, prostrated, he repeats his prayers. And when his prayer is ended, he says: "O Lord, forgive me for this imperfect worship of Thee."

You are always being told that the Hindu worships blocks of stone. Now what do you think of this fervent nature of the souls of these people? I am the first to come over to these Western countries,—it is the first time in the history of the world that a Hindu monk has crossed the ocean. But we hear of such criticisms and hear of these talks, and what is the general attitude of my nation towards you? They smile and say: "They are children; they may be great in physical science; they may build huge things; but in religion they are simply children." That is the attitude of our people.

One thing I would tell you, and I do not mean any unkind criticism. You train and educate and clothe and

pay men to do what? To come over to my country to curse and abuse all my forefathers, my religion and everything. They walk near a temple and say: "You idolators, you will go to hell." But they dare not do that to the Mahomedans of India; the sword would be out. But the Hindu is too mild; he smiles and passes on, and says: "Let the fools talk." That is the attitude. And then you who train men to abuse and criticise, if I just touch you with the least bit of criticism, with the kindest of purpose, you shrink and cry: "Don't touch us; we are Americans. We criticise all the people in the world, curse them and abuse them, say anything; but do not touch us; we are sensitive plants." You may do whatever you please; but at the same time I am going to tell you that we are content to live as we are; and in one thing we are better off—we never teach our children to swallow such horrible stuff, that man alone is vile where everything else is pure. And whenever your ministers criticise us let them remember this: If all India stands up and takes all the mud that is at the bottom of the Indian Ocean and throws it up against the Western countries, it will not be doing an infinitesimal part of that which you are doing to us. And what for? Did we ever send one missionary to convert anybody in the world? We say to you: "Welcome to your religion, but allow me leave to have mine." You call yours an aggressive religion. You are aggressive, but how many have you taken? Every sixth man in the world is a Chinese subject, a Buddhist; then there are Japan, Thibet, and Russia and Siberia, and Burma and Siam; and it may not be palatable, but this Christian morality, the Catholic Church is all derived from them. Well, and how was this done? Without the shedding of one drop of blood! With all your brags and boasting, where has your Christianity succeeded without the sword? Show me one place in the whole world. One, I say, through the

history of the Christian religion—one ; I do not want two. I know how your forefathers were converted. They had to be converted or killed ; that was all. What can you do better than Mahomedanism, with all your bragging ? “We are the only one !” And why ? “Because we can kill others.” The Arabs said that ; they bragged. And where is the Arab now ? He is the Bedouin. The Romans used to say that, and where are they now ? Blessed are the peacemakers ; they shall enjoy the earth. Such things tumble down ; it is built upon sands ; it cannot remain long. Everything that has selfishness for its basis, competition as its right hand and enjoyment as its goal, must die sooner or later. Such things must die. Let me tell you, brethren, if you want to live, if you really want your nation to live, go back to Christ. You are not Christians. No, as a nation you are not. Go back to Christ. Go back

to him who has nowhere to lay his head. The birds have their nests and the beasts their lairs, but the son of man has nowhere to lay his head. Yours is religion preached in the name of luxury. What an irony of fate ! Reverse this if you want to live, reverse this. It is all hypocrisy that I have heard in this country. If this nation is going to live, go back to him. You cannot serve God and Mammon at the same time. All this prosperity, all this from Christ ? Christ would have denied all such heresies. All prosperity which comes with Mammon is transient, is only for a moment. Real permanence is in Him. If you can join these two, this wonderful prosperity with the ideal of Christ, it is well. But if you cannot, better go back to him and give this up. Better be ready to live in rags with Christ than to live in palaces without him.

## AN OPEN LETTER TO HINDU WOMEN.

BY SISTER NIVEDITA

DEAR AND HONOURED LADIES,

It was the conviction of Swami Vivekananda that the future of India depended even more on Indian women than on Indian men. And his faith in us all was immense. It was Indian women who went gladly to the burning pyre, in days of old, to burn beside the dead body of the husband, and no hand was strong enough to turn them back. Sita was an Indian woman. So was Savitri. Uma, performing austerities to draw Mahadeva to her side, was the picture of an Indian woman. Was there any task, he argued, to which women such as these could prove unequal ?

In all lands, holiness and strength are the treasures which the race places in the hands of woman to preserve, rather than in those of man. A few men here and there become great teachers, but most have to spend their days in toil for the winning of bread. It is in the home that these renew their inspiration and their faith and insight, and the greatness of the home lies in the *Tapasya* of the women. You, Indian wives and mothers, do not need to be reminded of how much Rama, Sri Krishna, and Sankaracharya owed to their mothers. The quiet, silent lives of women, living in their homes like *Tapasvinis*, proud only to be faithful, ambitious only to be perfect, have done more to preserve the *Dharma* and cause it to flourish, than any battles that have been fought outside.



To-day our country and her *Dharma* are in a sore plight, and in a special manner he calls on her daughters at this moment to come forward, as those in the ages before, to aid her with a great *Sraddhâ*. How shall this be done? we are all asking. In the first place, let Hindu mothers renew in their sons the thirst for *Brahmacharya*. Without this our nation is shorn of her ancient strength. No country in the world has an ideal of the student's life so high as this, and if it be allowed to die out of India, where shall the world look to restore it? In *Brahmacharya* is this secret of all strength, all greatness. Let every mother determine that her sons shall be great. And secondly, can we not cultivate in our children and ourselves a vast *compassion*? This compassion will make us eager to know the sorrows of all men, the griefs of our land and the dangers to which in these modern days the religion is exposed; and this growing knowledge will produce strong workers, working for work's sake, ready to die, if only they may serve their country and fellow-men. Let us realise all that our country has done for us, how she has given us birth and food and friends, our beloved ones, and our faith itself. Is she not indeed our *Mother*? Do we not long to see her once more *Mahâbhârata*? Such are a few of the things, beloved mothers and sisters, that I think my Guruji would have said to you in so much better words than I have been able to find.

I beg of you always, for his sake, who made me his daughter and, therefore, your country-woman, to think of me and pray for me as your little sister who loves this beautiful and holy land, and who longs only to be shown how to serve you more and more effectively. And may I remind you also of him who stood behind the Swami Vivekananda, his Guru, Ramakrishna Paramahansa, and Kali, the Great Mother, whose power worked through both of these great souls, and will yet work doubtless in any of us who will but lend ourselves to Her influence?

In the name, and in the love of that Great Mother, I commend myself to you as, ladies,

Ever your most loving Sister.

NIVEDITA

of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda

## WILL THE TWAIN MEET?

BY THE EDITOR

I

We are asking this question in relation to science and religion. It is often said that the future of religion lies in the promulgation of a scientific religion. But what is science and what is religion? And what do we mean by a scientific religion? Two interpretations are possible of this last expression: (1) By scientific religion we may mean a religion the tenets of which are not

merely traditional, conventional and superimposed from outside and do not require to be blindly believed, but are capable of proof and have been demonstrated and rationally explained. We may briefly say that the main tenets of religion are concerned with God, immortal souls and a beatific destiny of those souls realised through communion with God. Are these capable of scientific proof? (2) Science has been accumu-

lating facts about reality through tireless research, which cannot be gainsaid. Science has taught a new kind of attitude towards life and reality. It has evolved a new outlook. And as a result the inherited moral and religious ideas are being given up one by one. New ideas of life and its fulfilment are cropping up. This new passion and new outlook—can they be made into a religion? Or can religion be reconciled with them? In our opinion, the second interpretation is more worthy of consideration than the first. Religion may be rationally placed before mankind, yet men may refuse to have anything to do with it;—the mind may not find itself agreeable to it. It may be that science has so moulded the outlook of thought that it is no longer in a line with religion however rational it may be.

It may be said that if religion is scientifically demonstrable, scientific minds must accept it. But is religion scientifically demonstrable? The basis of scientific proof is observation and experiment. Human mind is full of errors; so are the senses. They cannot be relied on. But dead instruments are faithful. They have no bias; they do not commit errors. So all truth must pass the test of instruments to be truly evidential and convincing. Instruments, therefore, are an essential part of scientific proof. Are religious truths capable of proof through instruments? Of course not. But though it is true that we cannot demonstrate religious truths scientifically, there is another view-point from which religion may be considered as thoroughly proved as any scientific truth. It must be admitted that in a scientific demonstration, not only should there be experiments, but the persons before whom the experiments are shown, should also be in a position to understand their significance. A previous training of their understanding is necessary. Take any physical or chemical experiment. Will a boor understand it? Certainly not. It is,

therefore, wrong to assume, as is often done, that a scientific demonstration has no subjective aspect but is universal and purely objective. The persons to whom the demonstrations are shown must have a requisite training. If that is so, why should we not concede the same necessity in case of religious proof? Let us have the necessary training to understand religious demonstrations, and then we shall know that spiritual truths are also as capable of sure proof as any scientific fact. The spiritually developed can evaluate spiritual phenomena as correctly as scientists do material phenomena. The mind becomes the instrument of test. With the spiritually developed, the mind is not so full of errors and so subjective as with ourselves. Religion is, therefore, challenging all sceptics to undergo the preparatory training and *then* set to spiritual research. But alas, this challenge is scarcely taken up by any one. The reason is obvious. This preparatory training which religion insists on, is a revolutionary one. It consists of a moral upliftment, a change of the outlook of life, and of a sincere and passionate eagerness for the supersensible. That means that we must take for granted the existence of a supersensuous reality, which no sceptic will ever do. If you are a sceptic, you will scarcely attach the required importance to moral observance, and cannot detach your mind from the objective. And if you do not do so, you are scarcely in a condition to undertake spiritual research. You are not prepared. The challenge and self-vindication of religion have, therefore, been scarcely heeded.

There are some who want to vindicate religion by subjecting it to the test of even material instruments. But we do not understand how that can be possible. It is true that our books and traditions speak of physiological changes brought on by spiritual experiences. Those changes are at least partly capable of being tested with material instruments, e.g., through X-ray photo-

graphy. But the facts of the original mental changes can only be inferred. They cannot be photographed. Here comes the necessity of belief or spiritual introspection. And sceptics may naturally refuse to accept our inferences, for those physiological phenomena can be conceivably produced by other causes also than what we infer.

The first interpretation of scientific religion, therefore, has to remain undecided. And perhaps no better proof than a rational explanation of the religious truths is necessary. When there is an inclination towards and faith in the value of religion, no higher proof than this is required. But the crux of the problem is that science has bred an anti-religious mentality. This aspect of the question we often ignore in our appreciation of the rational character of our religion. We must carefully analyse the scientific attitude, find its tendencies and its weakness and strength. Then perhaps we shall be able to know in what relation religion stands to the modern mind and if it can be really reconciled with science.

## II

It was unfortunate that modern science was born in a hostile atmosphere. In fact science was a protest against the theological and religious view that then existed in Europe; and it had to make its progress through tremendous opposition of religion. One whose upbringing is unhappy can scarcely evince a generous pleasantness in after life. The bitterness of early days tinges even the affluence of later days. Such has been the case with science. During its early days, its struggles against the persecutions of Christianity and the superstitions of the masses had been so keen and bitter that it was compelled to develop a too sceptical and hostile attitude towards the pre-existing knowledge. Scepticism and destruction became the slogan of science. The knowledge acquired through the experiences of people for thousands of years and the

religions and philosophies were all considered erroneous and valueless. Nothing should be believed unless the laboratory instruments passed it as correct. And, therefore, religion must go. Theology should be thrown into the scrap-heap. The social and politico-economical systems are all based on views of life and reality, which are erroneous and, therefore, should be abolished. Such was the attitude that science bred in men. We are not blaming science. Perhaps the prevailing conditions were such that science could not do otherwise.

But there were all this time those enigmas,—the human life and personality. The scientific attitude does not subsume all the ways and aspirations of human life and personality. The ways in which life progresses and fulfils itself are not logical or scientific,

they are allogical. Human personality also is not so definite or rational as the scientific attitude implies. Science represents only a fraction of the nature and workings of the human mind. What did science do with the remaining parts? Science did not accommodate itself to them. On the other hand, it insisted on those parts being adjusted according to its own attitude. That was, however, against nature. Man is three-fourths, if not more, irrational and one-fourth rational. He fulfils himself as much through error as through truth. The Truth towards which man is progressing through the experiences of countless lives, does not fall within the category of what is called scientific truth. The universe is a mixture of lights and shades. And life is benefited as much by light as by shade. Take, for instance, art. Art does not bother about the scientific verity of the subjects it deals with. The passing fancies, the flimsiest shadows, the airy nothings are enough for it. Yet its outlook and standard of evaluation is such that it reveals great spiritual truths and cause great satisfaction to the soul. Art, therefore, comes nearer to life than

science. Science did not and does not recognise this fact. It was and is too aggressive. It wants to exploit the entire mind for its own purpose. The result has been strange. While we talk of being scientific and rational, our life is really a bundle of incongruities. We profess to be sceptical about what have not been proved to us. But almost the whole of our life-activity is based on unproved grounds. No man can be a true sceptic. 'To be a sceptic is to die. The ordinary argument seems to be this: 'There is no proof that there is God or soul or immortality; let us, therefore, make much of this life. But has this life been proved? How do they know that this life is really what it appears to be? Why then do they conduct themselves according to appearance? True scepticism is indeed very rare. There are true sceptics only among the spiritually developed. They test the universe and find it shadowy. God alone they find to be real and they renounce the world for ever. Such is true scepticism and not merely a voluble profession of it.

It may be said that without extreme caution and destructive scepticism, the progress of science would have been impossible. It may be so. But it must be clearly understood that progress of science does not *necessarily* mean the destruction of all other knowledge. It was the unhappy conditions of society and culture that prevailed at the beginning of science in Europe and also the opposition of Christianity that made the new knowledge so aggressive and destructive. How did religion grow among mankind? How did philosophy grow? Their progress was not destructive, but assimilative and synthetic. People did not feel a sudden break between the old and the new, but only a gradual widening of vision. We believe that this steady gradual progress would have been possible also in case of science, if the prevailing circumstances in Europe had been favourable. We see it illustrated

in India. We do not find any great difference between the scientific outlook and the outlook of our religion and culture. To us they seem to be mutually corroborative. Of course we must admit that the scientific outlook as it is understood in the West is not the same as we in India understand it to be. This difference in interpretation is highly significant as we shall see later on.

### III

What is the scientific attitude as it is understood in the West? What are its implications? We have already referred to the distinctive method that science follows,—the elimination of subjective elements as far as possible through the use of instruments. This method necessarily limits the horizon of its enquiry. That which is not material and tangible, that which cannot be manipulated by instruments, must necessarily remain outside scientific enquiry. We are thereby at once limited to the merely material. All spiritual aspirations are negated at one stroke. We are made material, our outlook becomes materialistic. We seek to explain everything through matter and its laws. Life has to be explained as merely physiological. Mind also is a material mechanism, only finer. Who knows but life also can be one day produced in the laboratory. The funny thing is that if we so want, there are sufficient justification for viewing vital and mental phenomena as determined and mechanical like material phenomena. Materialists are rapidly gaining further and further confirmatory proof of their attitude. Quite recently a biologist, a professor of pathology in the University of London, drew attention to "quite a number of noteworthy similarities between present-day conceptions of the structure and behaviour of physical atoms, on the one hand, and our conceptions about the structure and behaviour of certain kinds of living organisms, on the other."

It is generally considered that science is only another method of arriving at general laws at which philosophy arrives through speculation. This is not, however, exactly the thing. No doubt science wants to establish laws. But more than that it seeks to know things as they really are. We ordinary men have attached certain fixed values to the things of our common experience. How these values originated, it is difficult to state. But that there is a great deal of difference between our ideas and scientific ideas of things, cannot be denied. To take an example : Surely we do not ever consider a piece of coal and a diamond to be of the same value. Yet in the view of science, both are carbon. Science is thus denuding the universe and life of their conventional values. Its ways of looking at things are not the common man's. And the more science is finding the prevailing ideas of things incorrect, the more cautiously and energetically it is searching into everything. A great part of our knowledge of things consists of the emotional reactions that we make to them. These are mainly, if not entirely, subjective. Science does not and cannot take these subjective elements into account. The universe that emerges from the scientist's laboratory is extremely unlike the universe as we know it. Most of our idealism is based on the apparent universe. The scientific knowledge of the universe, therefore, automatically kills all idealism. It is true we sometimes hear of speculative science. Even in the present days, Prof. Einstein is very urgent about speculative physics. But it cannot be denied that most scientists do not favour speculation and prefer to be realistic, and that the effect of science on the popular mind at least is nothing better than materialistic. Social values have to change, so also moral values. Our conception of our life and duties have to undergo corresponding changes. The relationships between man and man can no longer

subsist on conventional emotional regards. Where is the basis? The social, economical and political ideas have to change automatically. And all these changes have indeed come about. The economic life is changed beyond recognition. Social life has also similarly changed. Human relations have not been spared. The Westerners no longer look upon life and duties in the way they did before. Their visualisation of the future is also from the standpoint of the tangible and the material. The picture that rises before them of their future is not of their inner life, but of external changes consequent on the discovery of nature's secrets and their application to the sensuous purposes of men.

All these have followed from the unfavourable circumstances amidst which science was born and developed and from its peculiar outlook and method.

#### IV

We must understand the significance of these changes clearly. Let us take the case of chastity. Chastity has been considered by all religions as a basic quality of spiritual life. It is also looked upon as one of the principal moral virtues in all civilised communities. But what is its value in the eye of science? We shall not consider here the instances of spiritual persons. But to most men and women, chastity appeals as a moral virtue sanctified by traditions. But suppose the traditions break down. The sanctity that attaches to it will automatically vanish. Science does not bother about the mental effect of anything. In fact to it mind is a vague unknown entity, and it does not consider it except in its effect on the body. Science is scornful of traditions. The idea of sanctity, therefore, vanishes totally. Does chastity conduce to physical well-being? That is the main point to be considered. If it does, let us treasure it. Western doctors are many of them against it in the sense of

complete abstention from sexuality. They consider it abnormal and harmful to the bodily system. But even if chastity is considered helpful to physical life, it is ignored in favour of what is nowadays called *enjoying life*. Life must be enjoyed! For there is nothing except this life. So there is little scope for chastity. No doubt the first stages of the unchaste life of a conventional man or woman will be attended with some bitterness and compunction of conscience. But that is because the hold of traditions and conventions is yet strong on the mind. These conventions are always foolish. They must go with scientific enlightenment. And they go. After the first stages have been covered, it is all smooth sailing. Conscience, that foolish repository of old-world notions, no longer troubles. But of course the body troubles sometimes. But science has also devised means to aid and heal the body.

Thus described it no doubt reads terrible. But it cannot be denied that the picture has some resemblance to realities and that it is mostly due to the scientific outlook. Science has divested life of all conventions, moral or otherwise; it has at least minimised their value. People incline to carnal pleasures for two reasons. There may be an inner hankering for such pleasures. Or higher ideals may be unknown. The present tendencies to physical enjoyment are due to both these reasons, but mainly, we believe, to the second one. A writer thus describes the modern tendencies, as reflected in literature, in an article in *The Forum* (New York): "He (an author) cannot be bothered, except incidentally, with pretensions or disguises or gestures. He wants to get at something that is fundamental and true. He wants to reach what is central and enduring in human experience. He turns, therefore, in this particular era, to the basic elements of human life—to birth and death, to lust, . . . . What else is there for him to do?

Religion, idealism, heroism, romantic love, gentility—he discerns only hypocrisy and self-deception in these. So anxious is the modern author to penetrate below the superstructure of convention and evasion that he probes the darkest recesses of the mind, creating new forms to permit the expression of what he discovers. It is not necessary to assume that contemporary literature has gone Freudian; these writers are following their own experience and not the text books of Vinnese professors. Their consciences, sharpened perhaps by the spirit of scientific inquiry, drive them on in the search for what is real. They are willing to accept anything that is unpleasant so long as they believe it is true. Indeed, they are almost ready to assume that only what is unpleasant can be true, since so much that was comfortable and consoling has turned out to be false." Again: "In such works we have a reflection of what might be called the modern mind—one of the modern minds, at least. Bereft of faith in God and faith in man, self-conscious and cynical with regard to his own pretensions, unable to justify the conviction that the work he is trying to do is somehow significant, the literary artist is in no mood to place high value on ideals and aspirations. He may hope and even believe that there is something in life besides lust, but he is unpleasantly aware that he can be sure of nothing but the animal passions. To these he will cling rather than run the risk of encouraging hypocrisy and becoming the victim of self-deception."

Science has destroyed moral and spiritual idealism. There are no restraining powers now. Therefore the sanctity of marriage is ridiculed. Faithfulness to the marriage vow is of little consequence. That old-world idea which used to consider even the casting of a lustful eye on a woman as grievously sinful, has no scientific basis. Marriage is for enjoyment, and

progeny if the nation requires it. Why need there be lifelong faithfulness of love and chastity to the same man and woman? The fact is, chastity has its supreme justification in a spiritual consideration. It has been found from long experience that without complete chastity no spiritual progress is possible. There may be worldly prosperity without it. We may even grant, though we do not believe it, that without it social life of a sort of wild socialistic type may also be possible. But no spiritual progress. And can man ever find peace and real happiness without spirituality? But science has nothing to do with spirituality, it does not recognise it. So chastity has lost its value to the modern men and women.

We have specially dwelt on chastity, because it is fundamental. The change in this one case has meant a revolutionary change in the entire life of men and women. Domestic life is breaking. Women are seeking and finding new scopes. Economic and social changes have followed, and also political changes. But apart from its effect on chastity, the scientific attitude has brought about many other far-reaching changes in the individual and collective life of men. It has not only changed old institutions but has also evolved new ones. It has given birth to new feelings and aspirations in which lie its positive value, greatness and high hopes, though may be in potential forms. One of these is an inordinate hankering for power.

## V

The above is, as we have understood, the nature of the scientific outlook as it prevails in the West. Says Bertrand Russel: "Science of itself does not offer us any moral ideas at all, and it is doubtful what moral ideas are going to replace those that we owe to tradition." If science is such, what is the chance of its reconciliation with religion? What are the prospects of religion in the present age? We

need not discuss the case of Hinduism. For, we do not feel any conflict between science and religion. We spoke of a difference between our conception of the scientific outlook and the Western conception of it. It is not necessary that the scientific outlook and its influence would be the same everywhere. Much depends on the nature and perfection of the knowledge that existed before science. The different antecedents of the different civilisations will mean a necessary difference in the influence of science. The fact is, God, soul and other spiritual facts are not vague to us Indians. They are so vivid and so real to us that no onslaughts of science can shake our faith in them. They are not mere beliefs with us. There are many who have realised them in our own days. One Sri Ramakrishna is enough to impress a whole epoch of history with the overwhelming sense of their reality. Men are not guided by reason. What things we shall live by depends much on what have impressed our life and mind most. If religion had impressed the Western mind in the way it has the Indian mind, science would not have, in spite of its miraculous achievements and its extreme scepticism, created the havoc it has done in the Western life. *To admit the truth of spiritual realities is to see science at once in a different light.* Many of the emphatic assertions of science would appear unwarranted and unproved. We may mention last year's controversy on the survival of bodily death. Change of attitude means a great change in the evaluation of facts. At least the agnostic attitude towards spiritual verities, which is refused by science, could be maintained, and that would have spared the moral fabric of society. Our intense faith, born out of the experiences of great souls and confirmed by the partial visions at least of innumerable persons, has provided us with other standards of value, and we do not judge either material or immaterial realities in the way the

Westerners do. The problem of the conflict of science and religion, therefore, does not arise with us. It is true that with the propagation of scientific knowledge, many details will have to be changed, but the fundamentals are sound. We shall perhaps adopt alternative nomenclatures and explain in new fashions. But we know that the facts are known and understood well. Our religion is scientific in both senses: Its main tenets and philosophies are quite in accordance with the findings of science and are daily receiving greater and greater confirmation; and its attitude towards life and reality is the complete fulfilment of what science is only very dimly reflecting at present. It has also greatly minimised the mischiefs of science in that, having a true conception of the values of religious truths and of the truths of science, it has succeeded in maintaining a true balance between them without detriment to either of them.

But the case of the West is different. The Westerners cannot put faith in the supra-material realities with the same strength and understanding as we do. In fact, influenced as they are by science, they do not even feel inclined to do so. What are the prospects of religion with them? Can their present attitude be reconciled with the spiritual outlook? We may conceive of several prospects. (1) If the present scientific attitude continues, utter materialism of a very dangerous character will prevail. (2) But there are clear and significant indications that this outlook has already proved unattractive to many. No more reason, no more definiteness, but a mystic vagueness is being eagerly sought after. This is the reason of the growth of many mystic cults in the West at the present day. But that way lies the stultification of science, which will certainly be regrettable. (3) If this dissatisfaction with science and its results grows, it may be that in several centuries all enthusiasm for science will disappear. Through this failure of

science, man may again take to religion. This prospect, though distant, is not quite fantastic. (4) Religion may be so placed before mankind that there will be a strong rational appeal. Even if the spiritual realities are not scientifically demonstrable, they may yet seem quite probable and quite in conformity with proved facts. This way science and religion may be happily reconciled. The rational aptitude of the present age may help a rationally proposed religion prevail more and more among the Western people. (5) But as we have pointed out before, rationality is not the only element in the scientific attitude. Science has created a special attitude towards life, which is intensely realistic. We have described its nature and mentioned that the sense of power is a special characteristic of it. Therefore if there is any religion which can transform this attitude by a gradual fulfilment (and not denial), then that religion is *the* religion for the future, and that religion alone can be truly united with science and redeem it. We believe Vedanta can do it. The conception of man that has gradually evolved in the West through the vicissitudes of scientific influence has two elements in it, individual integrity and infinite powerfulness. And the conception of life and world that has emerged is that of one vast being teeming with potentialities, giving infinite scope to the individual to revel in. We do not know of any other philosophy or religion than Advaita Vedanta, that can easily transform and fulfil these conceptions. The Advaita conception of the individual is the sublimest. "Thou art That!" The God of infinite power, infinite blessedness, infinite joy, immortal and sinless, is man himself. Can there be a more hopeful and glorious conception of man than this? The conception of individual solidarity and the sense of power generated by science is easily transmuted and ennobled by the Vedantic



conception of man. It has been said that Advaita Vedanta preaches the doctrine of Maya and characterises the world as unreal, and that it, therefore, cannot appeal to the Western mind which eagerly believes in the solid reality of the world. Advaita Vedanta would surely be misunderstood if it is thought that it considers the universe unreal in this crude sense. It says: "O man, the world is not what it seems to you now. It is infinitely more glorious, infinitely more real, infinitely more lovable and enjoyable than you take it to be. It is Satchidananda itself. It is eternal, it is all-joy, all-light. *Sarvam khalvidam Brahma*—'All this is Brahman.' Know and love it as such, and not as you are doing at present." What can be more realistic than this? The scientific mind will avidly grasp at this idea. Let us on and on in our understanding. And the world will at last reveal itself as the embodiment of all that we are consciously and unconsciously seeking for ;

only, at a certain stage of our research, we shall have to change the laboratory instruments for the mental instrument, concentration, and the eternal secret will become patent for ever.

We thus consider Advaita Vedanta to be the hope of the present age. For it alone can successfully transform the dominant tendencies born of science, and through this, rehabilitate morality and religion. We may preach a rational religion. But it will fail to attract unless it has also the power to transmute and fulfil the science-begotten mentality. Advaita Vedanta does that, and it also states religion rationally, in consonance with the discoveries of science. The true reconciliation of science and religion lies in their agreement not only in doctrines but also in the mental attitudes implied. Advaita Vedanta fulfils both these conditions. In it alone lies the future of both science and religion, and if it fails, nothing else will succeed.

## NOTES OF CONVERSATIONS WITH SWAMI TURIYANANDA

20TH AUGUST.

*Swami T* : "Meditation begins with the unification of the meditator, the object of meditation and the act of meditation, when the separation between them is obliterated. When *japa* has become automatic, when a portion of the mind ever repeats the Name of itself, one may be said to have advanced a little in *japa*. In all cases the 'I' must be forgotten.

"At one time I felt that even every footstep of mine was through His power and that I had nothing. I clearly felt this. This feeling lasted for some days.

"Never expect anything from any one. But always give. Otherwise a sense of dryness will overtake you. I have seen many *Sadhus* who are dry and who think that because they have

become *Sadhus*, they have nothing to do with others. . . . But you must not give any one your mind. That you must give only to God. That is why you have not married. Pray crying to Him : 'O Lord, may I love Thee with all my heart!' The Master would instruct us to work with the hands but to keep the mind ever with Him.

"God is not partial. His grace is on all, good and evil, just as rains fall equally on all places. Whoever tills the land reaps the harvest. If any one says that he is specially beloved of the Lord, that is his own idea and attitude. He says so from the experience of his own life. But it is not universally true.

"There is another attitude, according to which God binds some and releases others. But who can assume this attitude? Only he who has

realised everything as one and who feels His mercy even amidst great sorrow.

"There is a third attitude: Whatever is good is His, and whatever is bad is the result of our own *Karma*. If we continue this attitude, we may eventually get rid of the ego."

7TH SEPTEMBER.

Swami T: "The *Jnanis* meditate in the head, the *Bhaktas* in the heart. We generally find so. But when as a result of meditation in the heart, spiritual consciousness expands, there is no more any fixed location of meditation.

"The Master had two moods: Sometimes he said that he did not like Divine forms, not even Kali, and his mind would be immersed in the Absolute. At other times, he said that he could not do without Divine forms, and he would say to the Divine Mother that he did not want to see Her formless aspect or have *Brahma-juana*. He who rejects everything and gets lost in the formless Brahman is one-sided. The *Jnani* is afraid of rebirth lest he be caught in the meshes of Ignorance. But the expert player does not fear anything. Similarly, he who has realised only the forms of God, but not His formless absolute aspect, is also one-sided.

"It is said in the *Puranas* that the Divine forms survive even the dissolution of the entire universe. As the Master said, there are places where the ice does not melt.

"Do not accept any gifts from any one. For the gifts will influence you, they will take away your independence. He alone can accept, who can consume, whose mind will not be affected, who feels them as gifts of God Himself. You may accept gifts only from good men who would not interfere with your independence and seek to control you.

"It is very difficult to truly understand the intricacies of the mind

without being an advanced *Sadhaka*. How many are the ways in which the mind is deluding us! If any one points out the delusions, we find excuses for them! We do not understand how many kinds of self-love fill us. It is no joke to submit to any one,—not outwardly, but in spirit.

"Swami Vivekananda was once reading the Bible. He was in those days a vegetarian. When he read of Jesus's flesh-eating, he did not like it. But at once he thought: 'Oh, how proud I have become because I am living on vegetables!' We read a lot, but can feel, retain and assimilate little. When the Master said to Girish Ch. Ghosh: 'What are you talking of *Brahma-juana*? Sukadeva saw and touched the Ocean of Brahman. And Siva drank only three handfuls of Its water and became a *savi* (corpse),' Girish Ghosh clasped his head and exclaimed: 'Stop, Sir, say no more. My head is bursting.'

"Formerly my nerves were very fine, and I had great powers of explaining things. Whenever any one put me a question, I could see everything from its ultimate origin to its outer expression,—I could see from what motive he spoke and why. And there was a flood of light in a single word of mine.

"I used to observe absolute silence during the *Nacaratni*. I would feel a sort of intoxication and the mind would be one-pointed. I have done what one being born a man should do. My aim was to make my life pure. I used to read a great deal, eight or nine hours daily. I read many *Puranas* and then the Vedanta and my mind settled on the Vedanta. The Master said jokingly to me: 'Tell me something of the Vedanta. Does not Vedanta say that Brahman is true and world false? Or does it say anything else? Then give up the false and take the true.' This was a turning-point of my life."

4TH NOVEMBER.

Swami T: "I travelled widely in the early days. I went towards the

Narbada, alone, without a pice with me, and I slept anywhere. I went via Allahabad, Chitrakut, Rewa and Jabbalpore, all on foot. Whenever I travelled I kept a place of pilgrimage in view and found out my way by enquiring of people. I went next to Hardwar, Hrishikesh, Uttarkashi, etc. I thought of not coming down from the mountains. I lived happily in the Gharwal hills, totally forgot the existence of the world and aimed only at God-realisation. I meditated and read a great deal. But Swamiji made me come down. I met him at Meerut. Some seven or eight of us lived together at Delhi. Then Maharaj (Swami Brahmananda) spoke of visiting Jawaliji and asked me to accompany him. So I went with him to Jawaliji, Copinathpur, Baijnath, Pathankot, Multan, Gujranwala, Montgomery and so on. And then we came down to Bombay via Karachi. At Bombay we met Swamiji about to embark for America. He said that the Parliament of Religions at Chicago was all for him, as if he saw the future. He asked me to return to the Math and to allow Maharaj to travel alone.

"I stayed for some time at Mt. Abu. From there I went to Ajmere and Pushkar and then to Brindaban where I stayed for six months. The next six months I passed at Lucknow. Then I went to Ayodhya. At Ayodhya Mahapurush (Swami Shivananda) met me and asked me to come to the Math.

"Though I travelled much, I also studied much all along. At Brindaban I studied a great deal of *Bhakti* scriptures. It is not good to wander much if you do not at the same time continue your *Sadhana*.

"In the Jagannath temple at Puri, suddenly a sound came to my ears and my heart was filled with a great joy so much so that I felt like walking on the air. The sound continued in various strains. My whole mind felt attracted. I then remembered what I had read of

*Anahata Dhvani* and I thought it must be that.

"At Ujjain, I was one night sleeping under a tree. A storm came and suddenly some one touched me on the body. I got up and at once a branch fell where I had slept. . . .

"When I first read the verse in which it is said that life is meant for the realisation of *Jivan-mukti*, I leapt in joy. For that indeed was the purpose of my life. . . .

"The first door of *Yoga* is the control of speech, non-acceptance of gifts, non-expectation, desirelessness and love of solitude.'—This verse had a great influence on me. Formerly I used to talk much. When I read it I thought: 'What! I have not entered even the first door of *Yoga*!' and I resolved that I would control my speech. I did not talk with any one, lived by myself and acted as I thought best. And I did not utter a single word during the nine days of the *Navantri*.

"It was Sankara who moulded my life. Before I came to the Master, a single verse of Sankara used to lift me a step up and give me a flood of light. In those days I used to find much new meaning in the verses. What is *parigraha* (acceptance of gifts)? Even if you do not accept anything, there may be *parigraha*. To think of means for the future, that is *parigraha*. Birth and rebirth all follow from *parigraha*. We are already thinking of ways and means for the future. Wherever our mind is, there we also are. If you do not have *parigraha*, where would your mind be? Naturally on the Atman itself. This one practice of *aparigraha* can take you to the highest. . . .

"Once I was sitting alone by the Ganges after my companions had left. I began to meditate and by and by it became 2 o'clock. Then some one suddenly said: 'Come, let us go home.' These words seemed to club me on the head. I understood that they had come from my mind itself. There was really no home. But the

mind had been thinking that there was a home where I was to return. I then determined that I would destroy this tendency of the mind. . . .

"Oh, those days are coming to my mind. While I lived at Srinagar Ghat, I used to rise very early and bathe. Then I would sit in meditation and afterwards read. At eleven, I would rise and procure some food in an hour.

Then would again begin meditation and *japa*. And thus every day. It was there that I committed eight Upanishads to memory. I would meditate on every verse I read and what an indescribable joy it was! I used to read the commentary of Sankara and the *Tika* of Jnanananda. And much further light used to come through meditation." . . .

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## THE PROMOTION OF WORLD PEACE

BY SWAMI NIKHILANANDA

The greatest characteristic of the phenomenal world is its illusoriness. Our hopes and aspirations, activities and pastimes, achievements and failures, progress and degradation, all are but different facets of a dream, different settings of a magic kaleidoscope. The realisation of Reality alone can convince one that the best and the worst of the universe are all equally dreams. History shows that the world is like a dog's curly tail which can never be made straight. The sum total of misery and happiness is always the same. Evil is like chronic rheumatism which only shifts position but never altogether vanishes. Good and evil proceed *pari passu*. One living in the world of phenomena can never free oneself from the pairs of opposites. This is Maya. The Kingdom of Heaven upon earth, Eternal Peace, Eternal Progress, the Millennium, and such other dreams of the idealists are, therefore, contradiction in terms. The Kingdom of Heaven on earth, for which the Son of God shed his blood, is not nearer to us, by so much as a jot or tittle, after two thousand years. The ideal of non-resistance to evil, preached by Gautama Buddha, is as unrealised to-day as it was twenty-five hundred years ago. Only some individuals realised these ideals and were at peace with the world.

The existence of world-peace is felt only in the heart of the individual.

### I

Three stages may be said to characterise the evolution of men. Firstly, there is the stage of competition. Men look upon one another with extreme suspicion. They scratch one another's eyes like wild vultures. The slogan of this period is, "Let everyone take care of himself and the devil the hindmost." This is the mentality of the nomadic tribes moving on the high table-lands or steppes. But hard experience gradually teaches man that the spirit of competition cannot be conducive even to individual happiness. Always scenting danger about him, man can never feel secure. Besides, in the age of competition for creature comforts, men find little time and less opportunity for the culture of higher instincts. Peace and security are the *sine qua non* of progress. Then the people of similar minds coalesce together into a nation. Organisation of life and activities among the members gives the nation the requisite peace and security for the development of its culture and the promotion of its happiness. In this stage, the nation-idea crystallises, kingdom grows and state develops. In this stage, again, different states co-

operate with one another for protection against stronger rivals or the exploitation of weaker ones. But there is no real amity between nations. The different nations, though apparently living together in a state of peace, present the spectacle of a battle-field where the belligerents live in camps in a state of war-preparedness. The bond of unity among them is extremely rickety and gives way before the slightest stress of circumstances. Political expediency is a master juggler, which holds in its hands a magic kaleidoscope and takes malicious delight in making and breaking sworn alliances and combinations. This is writ large in the history of Europe and the world. No doubt, during the last many decades, the states of Europe manifested a wonderful spirit of unity. But to what purpose? The pragmatic value of this unity has been the destruction of weaker peoples, the exploitation of the helpless nations, the protection of self-interest and the aggrandisement of national glory. The spirit underlying co-operation is the spirit of the nomadic world. It is the spirit of the great plains and the high seas.

But the next stage in man's evolution is characterised by the spirit of consecration. Then man understands that his real happiness and that of the nation consist more in the conceding of privileges than in exacting them from others. Real bliss comes from renunciation and self-denial. The whole world is like a human body and all the limbs must co-operate with one another in promoting the happiness of the body itself. Any cussedness or truculence on the part of the individual in looking to the interest of the whole cannot but ultimately spell its own ruin. A chain is as weak as its weakest link. The rope by which the slave is dragged also impedes the progress of the master. Nationalism as a god must follow the tribal gods to the limbo. Our true nationality is all mankind. But will this ideal be ever realised?

## II

Individually speaking, there are always found some men who sincerely want peace. Realising the evanescence of the world, they gradually learn to discover peace and happiness in their own self. But the sincerity of the people in general, asking for permanent peace, must be taken *cum grano salis*. Oftentimes this general banking for peace follows a great war causing enormous expenses, blood-curdling horrors, terrible brutality and the wholesale disturbance of the tranquillity of life. People for the time being become overwhelmed by the colossal proportions the miseries of a war assume; and weariness and disgust follow. But weariness and disgust, horror and pity, even the realisation of the practical fact of the dislocation of the normal life and harm and extravagance do not become permanent. Human nature recuperates itself and rekindles the instincts that were temporarily subdued. War is followed by peace, a long or a short one. But ultimately peace comes to an end under the stress of human passions.

The history of the last few centuries shows occasional outbursts of humane sentiments for the establishment of peace in the world. But history shows again the lamentable failure of all such attempts. The generality of mankind still looks upon war as a biological necessity. Its psychological necessity lurks deep in human nature. Let us swiftly glance at the different attempts that have been made from time to time for establishing good-will and brotherhood among mankind. The motive behind the campaign of Alexander, Cæsar or Napoleon was, perhaps, the establishment of a world kingdom in which people will live amicably, under an emperor, like good brothers. But the dream of these potentates proved, perhaps, more ephemeral than even our flimsiest dream of the night. People hugged to their bosom various ideas, such as the Court of Arbitration, the Concert of Europe, the Balance of

Power, the growth of democracy, the extension of commerce and the progress of science, as potent means to bring all wars to an end. Believing that wars are generally the outcome of the ugly passions of greedy kings and statesmen, they thought that the increased participation of the people in the administration of the state would stop the mad orgies of the Armageddon in the world. It was expected that different countries having extensive commercial relations with one another would discard warfare for fear of jeopardising their commercial interests. And it was also thought that nations equipped with up-to-date instruments of destruction, dangerous and cruel, through the progress of science, would not dare to draw sword against one another for fear of perishing with it. But the last great war as well as a few preceding it, has utterly demonstrated the utter hollowness of such expectations. Even while the head of the state hesitated to throw up the gauntlet, the rabble, the 'demos' goaded him to take part in the terrible holocaust with their wild hurrah. Scientists with their labour and researches only helped to make the destruction complete. Commercial interests supplied the sop to Cerberus.

It is contended that many good-hearted people took part in the last war hoping confidently that that war would end all future wars. But what was the feeling prevailing at Versailles at the time of signing the peace treaty? The Big Three with their fingers still red with tepid human gore drafted the terms of peace. "The world had to be made safe for democracy," said President Wilson. But M. Clemenceau expressed by his attitude that it was talking like Jesus Christ. No, the world had to be made safe for Paris. The defeated nations had to satisfy the revengeful thirsts of the victorious allies. The great powers wildly participated in the general loot. They followed the old annexation policy under very thin camouflage. The noble ideal of 'self-

determination' was thrown to the scrap-heap. The geographical and ethnological boundaries were superseded by man-made boundaries.

For the time being President Wilson focussed the attention of the entire world upon his pet scheme of the League of Nations, which he declared would be the substantial realisation of peace. But this homunculus in a bottle, which, it was hoped, might become at last the Man ruling the earth, this League of Nations, was not a league of people at all; it was a federation of states, dominions and colonies. It failed to achieve its much-advertised purpose, and no better result can be conceivably the outcome of an organisation which is mainly guided and wirepulled by diplomats and statesmen who promise only to betray, and flatter only to ruin; and however they may occasionally bind themselves by oaths and treaties, their conscience, obsequious to their interests, always releases them from inconvenient obligations. The League of Nations emphasises nationality. It defers to sovereignty. But the world perishes unless sovereignty is merged and nationality subordinated.

Thus the peace-attempts after the great war have passed away like a burst of laughter in a tavern. The face of Europe, artificially rejuvenated, shows now the flush of a wasting fever. And it is but natural. While a saner section of people in every land is anxious for peace, the diplomats and militarists everywhere are hatching plans for making the next war more horrible and murderous. They want to get on with their armaments to keep ahead. It is necessary to develop new arms. The nation which does so would have a great advantage in the next war. In addition to the tank, the armies must use caterpillar wheels for mechanical transports, and these wheels must advance in open order on a broad front carrying guns, munitions, supplies, men and other accessories of war--and incidentally ploughing up and destroying hedges,

ditches, fields and cultivations, leaving nothing behind but blood-streaked mud. Flying destroyers must play an important part. Bombs must be dropped not merely on the army lines, but also where stores are being manufactured and troops trained. The Government should place more trust on its own right hand and in its own stretched-out arm than in any organisations like the League of Nations. War is war and its only law is the maximum destruction of the enemy forces with the minimum efforts. This being the predominant feeling, how can one expect for permanent world peace, when an influential section of people does not know what it is to live in love and sympathy with others as some dirty, poor, ill-treated and fierce-soaked creature, born and bred amidst the cruel and dingy surroundings of a London or Paris back street does not know what it is to bathe everyday, always to be beautifully clad and to meet agreeable and well-mannered people or do beautiful things?

The crimson colour in the Western horizon of to-day is not the precursive hint of a glorious dawn. It is the wild scarlet of the licking flames of a terrible sepulchre. The writers, thinkers and preachers are only adding to the fury by their shrieks and howls. Europe is placed on the crater of a smouldering volcano. It is growing too enormous and soon it will be buried under the weight of its own enormity. This mad cry of nationalism is like a huge frankenstein which ultimately devours its own author. People are moving in a breakneck speed. New excitements are being invented daily to invigorate their over-wrought nerves. Passions are running high everywhere. The European states have lost all ideals of broad outlook. Each state maintains its own educational system, teaches a partial and lying history and instils a poisonous national conceit. Europe has no world politicians, no broad-minded leaders but only narrow-minded statesmen, tariff-sustained business-magnates,

newspapers with limited outlook, state-supported teachers and national universities.

But the unseen hand has already written the fatal words on the wall of the European Courts. A generation is rising from the ruins of the old world who will not stand any such nonsense. The persecuted and the tortured are slowly raising their heads. There is a tremendous awakening in China, Turkey and the Asiatic Muslim states. Nationalism that dominates Europe to-day is like a drunken shouting bally who lords it over and deafens everyone in a room, until he is suddenly flung out and everyone is incredulous that he was ever tolerated.

We have seen the political forces that have hitherto fostered the spirit of enmity and strife among men. There are other aspects also. Another class of people thinks that the cultural contact between different nations through the study of ethnology, sociology, history and theology goes a great way towards bridging the gulf that exists between race and race. But unfortunately the result of the contact between two cultures has hitherto proved disastrous to the realisation of such an ideal. The intellectual sections of powerful nations, professing to live above the *sturm und drang* of the political turmoil, have rather helped to accentuate the differences between nation and nation. Whenever European culture protected by the serried phalanx of armed forces came in contact with other cultures, physically but not culturally weak, it generally exterminated the latter or imposed upon the latter its own ideal of civilisation. Only in Indian history does one find the healthy process of cultural assimilation which attitude the free and virile India took towards her invaders. Therefore we in India possess a grand composite culture containing the best elements of outside civilisations. The protagonists of cultural unity in Europe with their obsession of superiority-complex have failed to bring

about the much desired unification of the world on a cultural basis.

And last of all, come to the field the religious preachers. Christ preached the religion of love. Buddha enjoined upon all to follow the doctrine of non-resistance to evil, saying that hatred ceases not at any time by hatred but by love alone. Love has been prescribed by all great prophets of humanity as the greatest factor in changing the animal propensities of men and raising them high to the throne of God. But unfortunately the world is witnessing to-day the strange spectacle of the followers of Christ and Buddha most cruelly murdering not only the followers of other religions but also the members of their own faiths. The same baser passions are at work here too. Brotherhood of God and brotherhood of men are nice principles so far as they are written in the book. But at crucial times these ideals are not found worth the paper on which they are written. Religious bigotry is responsible for the shedding of more blood in the world than any mundane reason. Religious preachers and religious organisations have been sowing everywhere the seeds of dissension and strife. Instead of holding out the olive-branch, they throw before the world the apple of discord. Instead of following the ideals of our prophets, we are prompted to actions by the malicious propensities of our own animal passions. There has been a distinct slipping-off from the ancient ideal and a real de-spiritualisation of religion. Some inevitable obsessions are always associated with all historical religions. Believing in the Divinity of a single man, the followers of such religions soon degenerate into bigots and fanatics and set out to convert the world either by sword or other unfair means and send the non-believers to hell to be eternally tortured and barbecued. The prophets are not to blame; but we, the followers, misunderstand them and are responsible for the untold miseries that exist in the world to-day.

### III

Most of the religions have hitherto only preached the brotherhood of men, refusing in theory and practice to recognise men of other faiths as brothers. But this relationship is also a fragile bond which breaks up under the pressure of our animal instincts. Brother stabs in the back of brother or hits below the belt to ensure his own happiness. Here the Hindu Philosophy - I mean the Vedanta, sounds a deeper note. It preaches the philosophy of Atman or Self. Everything in the world is to be loved for the sake of the Self. We love children, wife, wealth and everything that exists only for the sake of this Self. But because we forget the real nature of this Self and look upon the gross forms as conducive to our happiness, the bliss that we derive from the enjoyment of the earthly objects is extremely transient and fugitive in nature. The Self of the Vedanta Philosophy is Brahman, eternal, unborn and undying. It is Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute. In the same breath the Vedanta declares that I am that Brahman. All my ideas of weakness and limitations are due to the ignorance of my real nature. It is only through ignorance that I see difference, by creating multiplicity in the universe. In fact there is no separate existence which I should love or hate or for which I am called upon to make sacrifice. By loving others I only love my own self. By hating and injuring others I only hate and injure myself. Hence the Vedantist does not at all consider that he foregoes a portion of his own pleasure by showing solicitude for the happiness of others. This philosophy alone gives us the *rational* of love and sacrifice, the two great factors for bringing peace to the world.

The Vedanta declares that real happiness consists in the realisation of the Spirit and renunciation of earthly possessions. It declares the glory of Atman before whose magnitude, the sun, the moon, the whole creation, appear



like a drop in the ocean and before whose glory, the whole space melts into nothingness. The real strength of a man is the strength of the Self and the consciousness of the unity with Existence itself. All fear is the outcome of duality. This is Maya and therefore unreal. The war preparations of the strong nations are due to this idea of duality and separation and betray the psychology of weakness. Europe lives to-day in armed camps so that it may not be caught unawares. Man thinks himself hopelessly dependent upon inert and lifeless matter for securing his happiness. Life is intolerable without beer and skittles, without the trinkets and gew-gaws of modern civilisation. When man realises himself as the One Being without a second, he is not afraid of anybody else. When he feels within the glory of the Atman he does not go to worthless matter for peace and happiness. So long as the strong nations of Europe do not realise the glory of the Self and the evanescence of the world, peace and happiness will ever recede from before them like the proverbial cup of Tantalus. In the domain of theology the grandest contribution of the Vedanta philosophy is that it does not disturb anybody's faith, however crude and gross the latter may be. It recognises all the prophets and scriptures of the world as manifesting different aspects of Truth. As the howlings of jackals are hushed at the roaring of the lion, so all quarrels and screechings cease when the Lion of Vedanta roars.

#### IV

The world adopted various measures for the promotion of peace. But all these have proved abortive. But the experiment of the realisation of Unity underlying the universe, through Vedanta, has not yet been tried and we commend it to the rational world, at least for the novelty of the thing. Science and philosophy have discovered unity in the realms of matter and mind.

Let men on the religious plane realise and proclaim this unity of Spirit. Let people be taught that the world is a cosmic whole; and love and hatred shown to any one part ultimately react upon the entire body. Let all the activities in the various spheres of life be attuned to this one ideal. Let this ideal of unity be preached from the altar, pulpit and platform. Let this ideal be taught in schools, colleges, in the high ways and byways of life. It is an auspicious time. A sane section of people, in every country, has been demanding peace. Blind materialists and wily diplomats cannot be expected to understand the utter bankruptcy of the present-day world. A limit must be imposed upon military operations and political exploitations. Things cannot go on in this fashion *ad infinitum*. No people after the terrible experience of the last war should want any more to stand such warfare as the militarists contemplate, not even the men on the winning side. Imperialism has no longer any persuasive power. It goes on for sheer want of wits to leave off. The war that lies ahead will not be encouraged by the masses. It will be certainly a more disorderly but less intensive war.

At the present moment it is the bounden duty of everyone to proclaim the message of peace. Let the historians, archaeologists, ethnologists, philologists, educationists and the like, undertake the task of creative analysis which the scientific men of the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries did for the materials and mechanism of human life. The latter perhaps, unconsciously helped to discover telegraphy, swift transit on land and sea and a thousand impossible things. Let the former, too, consciously do greater things in more urgent human affairs. Let economic organisers exploit all material wealth and every fresh possibility that science reveals, for the common good of the world. Private enterpriser will be a servant—a useful,

valued and well-rewarded servant—and no longer the robber master of the Government. Let currency be safeguarded against the contrivances and the manipulations of clever and dishonest men. Let the philosophy of State be totally revolutionised. The loftiest idealism of yesterday seems but sheer commonsense to-day. Let the states be free from all obsessions of an aggressive foreign policy. All subject nations must be freed. A permanent world peace can never be effected without the independence of the Asiatic nations. The principle of self-determination by the people should be the guiding policy of all states. It must not be obscured by the thin camouflage of trusteeship, guardianship and mandatorship. The words, thoughts and actions that are patriotic and laudable in England must not be considered seditious in India, China or Egypt and therefore ruthlessly suppressed. Let America show to other peoples of the world the same lofty idealism which her earlier statesmen, Washington, Franklin and Lincoln, expressed for their own people. Tyranny in all spheres of life must be banished once for all. The present bar of the white people against the coloured races must be removed. Army, navy and air forces must play a subordinate part in the state organisation. Different states with their respective national ideals must have the international outlook. Man must learn to see things beyond the tip of his nose. Indentured and forced labour of all kinds must be abolished. The capitalist should no longer treat the labourer as the beast of burden to be perpetually exploited, but treat him courteously and respectfully as co-partner with him in the production of wealth. No one must enjoy too much of cakes unless everyone has got bread. The guiding principle of economic adjustments should be equitable distribution of wealth. Education must be open to the whole race, not simply to the classes and peoples. If the rich and the advanced people

require the light of education, it is all the more necessary for the poor and the depressed. Knowledge is the common property of all. The altar of learning is the only place before which all people can assemble together and offer their united worship. It is education alone, based upon broad and sound basis, which can accelerate the process of mutual understanding and respect.

Education and religion are the two greatest factors in the evolution of a culture. They are interrelated. The separation of education and religion is the greatest tragedy of the present age. As its consequence, international politics has reverted to a brutal nationalism and this is responsible for the drift of industrial and business life towards harsh, selfish and uncreative profit-seeking. The aim of education is to draw men of alien races and discrete traditions into one common and sustained way of living for the world's service. Education is the preparation of the individual to be the worker for world-welfare and his religious training is the core of that preparation. The religious ideal must be as broad as the sky and as deep as the ocean. Various denominational religions must learn to feel that all creeds express the same truth in more or less varying degrees. If one religion is true, then other religions must be equally so. All religions lead their votaries to the same goal, namely, the realisation of eternal peace and happiness. Rituals, ceremonies and mythologies are but the different paths, suited to different temperaments, to realise the same goal. These are as necessary for the beginners as the philosophy for the adepts. A class of intellectual people is eager to do away with the ceremonials of religion and formulate a universal religion based upon eclecticism and syncretism. This cannot solve the problem of religious bigotry but will only add, we are afraid, to the existing number of fanatical creeds. Uninspired intellect and unpurified reasonings occupy a very low

position in spiritual affairs. Intellectual giants are often found to be mere spiritual babies. There should be a genuine effort by the sincere soul to understand not only his own religion, but those of others as well. A real lover of Christ cannot but be a worshipper of Muhammad, Buddha, and the Indian sages. Different religious paths must remain ; the realisation of the unity in diversity is the consummation of spiritual life.

## V

Like other idealists, I also cherish faith in the near approach of the Millennium. But, perhaps, my idea of the Millennium will differ from that of many others. In my conception of the Satya-Yuga or the Millennium, many things will be possible which we cannot possibly dream of or desire in this present age of exhaustion. But anyhow in my Kingdom of Heaven on earth, men and his activities will not be reduced to a state of sameness and uniformity. There must remain as many thoughts as there will be minds. Variety must continue to exist. It is the law of creation. Perfect balance or perfect harmony means dissolution. Creation is possible only when the balance is disturbed or lost. So I do not conceive that in my ideal Millennium all people will think the same thought and be like the Egyptian mummies staring at one another's face with a blank gaze having no thoughts to think. In the ideal world, different nations will retain their national characteristics. The form of Government and the shape of social structure will be moulded after the evolved instincts of the race. The ideal world-society, world-law and world-culture will teach every individual to understand the higher meanings of

life. The drift of life and activities will always be Godward. In the Millennium, the army and the navy will not altogether vanish nor evil be totally eradicated. People with *Sattvika*, *Rajasika*, and *Tamasika* propensities will continue to remain. But virtue will triumph. There will be sin even in the ideal age. But people will be ashamed of it ; they will not worship and glorify it as they do at present. Excitements and enjoyments will remain. But people will derive greater pleasure from exploring new and wonderful things of spiritual life and enjoying spiritual felicity. And lastly, the culture and training of the Millennium will teach mankind to disregard all material possessions as impediments to the realisation of Truth. People will learn that real happiness consists more in the purification of the internal propensities than in any adjustment of outside nature. Social organisations and social laws will enable men to transcend the society, go beyond the bondage of matter and enter into the ineffable region of the Beyond wherein alone abides happiness in its pristine glory and excellence. The ideal world will consciously afford greatest opportunities to individual souls to realise this state, and such realisation by the greatest number of people will enable the generality of mankind to approach the highest verity of life.

The ideal of perfect peace and happiness shall ever remain an ideal for humanity as a whole and only may be realised by a greater or smaller number of individuals through individual efforts according to the prevailing tendencies of the age. The more humanity learns to proceed consciously towards this ideal, the greater is the possibility of strifes and wars coming to an end and peace and happiness adorning the fair face of God's creation.

" . . . upon the banner of every religion will soon be written, . . .  
 "Help and not Fight," "Assimilation and not Destruction," "Harmony and Peace and not  
 Dissension."—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

## THE ISLAMIC CONCEPTION OF GODHEAD

BY WAHED HOSAIN

### VI

The Muslim philosophers do not regard the pure Divine Essence as entirely devoid of any quality. They hold that the Divine Essence has certain inherent qualities which are the qualities of the essence, as distinct from the attributes of action. They are in the essence and not separate from it.

The *Nahj-ul-Balaghah* quotes the opinion of Imam Jafar-us-Sadiq to the effect that "God is Omniscient, because Knowledge is His essence; Mighty, because Power is His Essence; Loving, because Love is His Essence . . . not because these are attributes apart from His Essence."

The *Sifatias* (lit. Attributists) who claimed to be the direct representatives of the ancient primitive Muslims (*Salaf*) also held similar views. According to Shahristani, these followers of the *Salaf* "maintained that certain eternal attributes pertain to God, viz., knowledge, power, life, will, hearing, sight, speech, majesty, magnanimity, bounty, beneficence, glory, and greatness . . . making no distinction between qualities of essence and attributes of action. They also assert certain descriptive attributes (*Sifat-i-Khabria*); as for example, hands and face, without any other explanation than to say that these attributes enter into the revealed representation of the Deity, and that accordingly, they had given them the name of descriptive attributes." (*The Spirit of Islam*, P. 382). The opinion of the *Sifatias* is not accepted in its entirety.

On the other hand, according to Shahristani the *Muta'zilas* declare that "Eternity is the distinguishing attribute of the Divine Being; that God is Eternal, for Eternity is the peculiar property of His Essence. They un-

animously deny the existence of eternal (Divine) qualities (*Sifat-ul-gadamia*) as distinct from His being, and maintain that He is Omniscient as to His being; Living as to His being; Almighty as to His being; but not through any knowledge, power, or life existing in Him as eternal attributes; for knowledge, power, and life are part of His Essence; otherwise, if they are to be looked upon as eternal attributes of the Deity (separate from His Essence) it would lend to the affirmation of a multiplicity of eternal entities." (*The Spirit of Islam*, P. 385). Such is the view of the *Muta'zilas*. The followers of Imam 'Ashary and the *Mutakallimin* (schoolmen) belonging to the *Sunni* school of thought hold that there are eight qualities appertaining to the Divine Being, which are the qualities of the Essence. These qualities are called *Sifat-i-haqiqia* or *Sifat-i-thabulia* i.e., the true and positive qualities of the Divine Essence. These qualities are: (1) *Hival*—self-existence i.e., subsisting and ever living from the eternity without beginning (*azal*) to the eternity without end (*abad*); (2) *'Ilm*—knowledge and consciousness, i.e., possessing knowledge of what is hidden and what is manifest, and conscious not only of His own existence but of all existences and events of the past, present and future; (3) *Takwin*—the power of initiative i.e., the Divine Essence is not a passive mass of consciousness, but possesses creative energy; (4) *Mashiyat-i-Irada*—the Divine will giving rise to the activity of desires; (5) *Qudrat*—innate power and strength; (6) *Kalam*—power of speech; (7) *Sama'*—clairvoyance. These eight qualities are said to be the qualities of the Essence. There are besides them, other attributes which are regarded as

attributes of action. It appears that there has been some divergence of opinion between the different schools of thought regarding the nature of the Divine attributes. According to one school of philosophers (*Mutakallimin*) the attributes are not of the Essence. According to the *Muta'zilit* school, they are not distinct from the Divine Essence ; and according to the *Asharyan* school, they are neither of the Essence nor distinct from it. Imam 'Ashary describes them by saying *la'ayna wa la ghaira i.e.*, neither of the Essence, nor separate from it. The disputation regarding the nature of the Divine attributes between the *Muta'zilit* and the *Asharyans* throw a flood of light on the subject. The *Mutakallimin* belonging to the *Sunni* school of thought generally agree with Imam 'Ashary. The *Sufi* fraternities as well as the *Sunni Mutakallimin* hold that the eight qualities, as enumerated above, are of the Essence, that other Divine attributes are neither of the Essence, nor distinct from it. The following instances may be cited in illustration of their views : The flower and its scent. The flower is not the scent, nor the scent is the flower ; but they do not exist separately. A thing and its colour. The thing is not the colour, nor the colour is the thing, but one is not distinct from the other. Sugar and its sweetness. The one is not the other, yet they do not exist separately. The Absolute Being is not, according to this conception, a luminous mass of consciousness—an incomprehensible absolute intellectual blank with excess of light—a rigid, frigid, passive Entity without the power of initiative and control, and regardless of human sufferings and entreaties. Such an attributeless and qualityless Being is considered worse than useless. Nobody has a need of such a powerless and helpless Absolute One who cannot do anything for himself, or for anybody else. The Muslim philosophers and *Mohaddisins* as well as *Ahl-i-Tasawuf* have, therefore, discarded

this sort of idea regarding the Absolute One. According to them the Absolute One is not an intellectual void, or a luminous nothing but a mere consciousness. Such an idea of absoluteness seems to be "a finished example of learned error." It is, therefore, maintained that the Divine Essence has certain qualities which are in the Essence itself. These qualities do not in the least affect the absolute nature of the Essence. If the Absolute Entity can be conceived as consisting of consciousness and luminosity, which do not affect its absolute nature, then some more qualities may similarly be attributed as appertaining to the absolute Essence without affecting its nature. Consequently the Supreme Being in the state of absoluteness, is conceived of as the Divine Essence full of splendour and perfection, creative energy and power of control, active will and comprehensive knowledge, inherent power of vision, and audibility.

The Islamic idea of the Absolute Being differs materially from that of the Neo-Platonists and some ancient Greek philosophers on the one hand, and the Absolute of Sankara on the other, according to whom the Supreme Being is a mere intellectual abstraction totally lacking in initiative. But it corresponds to a great extent with Ramanuja's theism with the exceptions of his theory of *Karma*, and *Janma* and *Avatara*, i.e. laws of action, cycle of birth and Incarnation. I quote here one passage from *Indian Philosophy*, which will throw some light on the topic :

"The nirguna Brahman which stares at us with frozen eyes regardless of our selfless devotion and silent suffering is not the God of religious insight. Sankara's method, according to Ramanuja, leads him to void which he tries to conceal by a futile play of concepts. His nirguna Brahman is a blank suggesting to us the famous mare of Orlando which had every perfection except the one small defect of being dead. Such a Brahman cannot be

known by any means of perception, inference or scripture. If the sources of knowledge are all relative, they cannot tell us of something which transcends experience ; if the scriptures are unreal even so is the Brahman of which they relate. . . . The qualities of being (sat), consciousness (chit), and bliss (ananda) give to Brahman a character and personality. . . . God is a perfect personality, since he contains all experience within himself and is dependent on nothing external to him. The differences necessary for personality are contained within himself. The most prominent qualities of God are knowledge, power and love (karuna). Out of his love God has created the world, established laws and helps constantly all who seek to attain perfection. While each quality by itself is different from the others, they all belong to one identity and do not divide its integrity of being. The Lord's connection with them is natural (svabhavika) and eternal (sanatana). These attributes are said to be abstract, as distinct from matter and souls which are also called the attributes of God." (*Indian Philosophy*, P. 683, by Dr. Radhakrishnan, M.A., D. Litt.).

In the above extract we find that Ramanuja's conception of the Supreme Being is almost identical with the Islamic conception of theism, with this difference that according to the Muslim philosophers in general, matter and souls are not the attributes of God, and that according to the *Sufis* in particular, they are the manifestations of the Divine attributes. But the Muslim philosophers differ materially from the views of Sankara on the same grounds as Ramanuja does, and for certain other reasons. The points of difference have been very lucidly explained by Professor Radhakrishnan in the ninth chapter of *Indian Philosophy*. He observes :

"Philosophy has its root in man's practical need. If a system of thought cannot justify fundamental human

instincts and interpret the deeper spirit of religion, it cannot meet with general acceptance. The speculation of philosophers which do not comfort us in our stress and sufferings are mere intellectual diversion and are not serious thinking. The Absolute of Samkara, rigid, motionless, and totally lacking in initiative or influence cannot call forth our worship. Like the Tajmahal, which is unconscious of the admiration it arouses, the Absolute remains indifferent to the fear and love of its worshippers, and for all those who regard the goal of religion as the goal of philosophy—to know God is to know the real. Samkara's view seems to be a finished example of learned error. They feel that it is as unsatisfactory to natural instincts as to trained intelligence. The world is said to be an appearance and God a bloodless Absolute dark with the excess of light. The obvious fact of experience that when weak and erring human beings call from the depths the helping hand of grace is stretched out from the unknown, is ignored. Samkara does not deal justly with the living sense of companionship which the devotees have in their difficult lives. He declares that to save oneself is to lose oneself in the sea of the unknown. Personal values are subordinated to impersonal ones, but the theist protests that truth, beauty, and goodness have no reality as self-existent abstractions. An experience that is not owned by a subject is a contradiction in terms. Truth, beauty and perfection speak to us of primal mind in whose experience they are eternally realised. God himself is the highest reality as well as supreme value. Moreover, the innermost being of God is not solely the realisation of eternal truth or the enjoyment of perfect beauty, but is perfect love which expands itself for others. The value of the finite world to the Spirit of the Universe lies in the spirits to whom he has given the capacity to make themselves in his own image. The spirits themselves possess

a value in the sight of God, and not merely their degrees of intelligence or virtue, abstractly considered, which they happen to realise. It follows that they are not made simply to be broken up and cast aside."

Such has also been the trend of arguments of the Muslim philosophers (*Mutakallimin*).

## VII

I now pass on to another topic. The charming description in *Al-Quran* of the all-pervading presence of the Supreme Being (*'ala kul-i-shayin mohit*), of the nearness of man to His gracious Personality (*agrabiat*) and of the fellowship of a loving invisible companion (*ma'iyat*) has an attraction of its own. Such description creates an impression of a personal God whose help and kindness, support and sympathy, the fervent soul may count upon amidst its trials and tribulations. "Remember Me and I shall remember you" is a very sympathetic response which produces balmy effect on the troubled soul. The conviction of the devotee that he is living in the presence of the Supreme Being who is near at hand and hears his supplications, strengthens his faith and gives a peculiar zest to his devotional communion. "Call Me and I shall hear your call" is the soothing assurance given in the *Quran*. The impression that the Deity whose Union he seeks is his true Darling (*janan-i-haqiqi*) augments the intensity of his desire for the realisation of His fellowship. In soft and inaudible voice the Merciful comforts the earnest seeker by saying "We are nearer to him than his jacular vein". Such voice draws him nearer to the Deity whom he worships in humility and earnestness. When an earnest soul intends drawing near to God, He assures him in the words of a *Hadith* by saying "When a man draws near to Me by one pace, I go nearer to him by ten paces," and points out how to realise Him. "Worship your Lord as if you are

seeing Him, but if you cannot see Him, then think that He is seeing you" (*Hadith*). Such tender solicitude leads the earnest devotee to the path of realisation.

Further, such friendly communion with the Deity and His sympathetic response cannot fail to establish a personal relationship with the Supreme Being. It is, therefore, said that *Allah* is a personal God in Islam. The conception of a personal God has given rise to the idea and practice of rendering personal services to God and working out one's own salvation. Salvation through an intercessor is not at all countenanced. The doctrine of the Original Sin and Atonement is discarded in toto. Every man is held directly responsible and accountable to God for his action. The whole responsibility lies on his shoulder alone. The *Quran* points out that "he who purifies himself, the purification does good to none else, but to himself; he who exerts in the cause of truth, exerts for himself only; he who does good deeds, does so for his own good." Thus neither priesthood nor intercession through an intermediary has any place in Islam. Even the Prophet was directed to say: "Preach it unto those who fear that they shall be assembled before their Lord: they shall have no patron nor intercessor except Him." The *Quran* further says: "We have not appointed thee (*i.e.*, the Prophet) a keeper over them, neither art thou a guardian over them" (*Sura VI*).

## VIII

In this connection it should be pointed out that Islam sets its face squarely against any anthropomorphic conception of the Supreme Being. The *Quran* repeatedly asserts that "there is nothing which can be likened unto Him." He is regarded as formless and colourless. But there are certain passages in *Al-Quran*, which apparently lend some colour to the anthropopathic

description of the Deity. For example, the texts which say :

"Your God is one in person."

"Wherever you turn your face, there is the face of God."

"Everlasting is the personality of thy Lord who is exalted and compassionate."

"Thou exalteth whomsoever Thou desireth, Thou degradeth whomsoever Thou willeth. In Thy hand is goodness."

"The words of thy Lord are perfect in truth and justice ; there is none who can change them ; He both heareth and knoweth."

In such passages it is maintained that the description of the Deity is figurative or metaphorical. The reference to the Divine person, face, hand, eye, ear, etc., is for the purpose of easy understanding by metaphors and similes. It only gives an idea of concrete monism. It is explained by saying that the Divine person and face convey the idea of the beauty and omnipresence of the Supreme Being ; Its hand has reference to its power of action ; Its eyes to Its omniscience ; Its ears to Its innate power to clairaudience ; and so forth. Such being the predominant ideas, any fictitious figure of the Deity is not permitted to be set up and worshipped. Islam declares that no figure, form, shape, or likeness of the formless Being is conceivable or possible. Hazrat 'Ali, the fourth *Caliph*, condemned in emphatic language all anthropomorphic and anthropopathic conceptions of the Supreme Being. He declared :

"God is not like any object that the human mind can conceive ; no attributes can be ascribed to Him, which bear the least resemblance to any quality of which human beings have conception from their knowledge of material objects. The perfection of piety consists in knowing God ; the perfection of knowledge is the affirmation of His verity ; the perfection of verity is to acknowledge His unity in all sincerity ; and the perfection of sincerity is to deny all

attributes to the Deity. He who refers an attribute to God believes the attribute to be God, and he who so believes an attribute to be God, regards God as two or part of one. He who asks where God is, assimilates Him with some object. God is the creator, not because He Himself is created ; God is existent, not because He was non-existent ; He is with every object, not from resemblance or nearness ; He is outside of everything, not from separation. He is the Primary Cause (*fa'il*), not in the meaning of motion or action ; He is the Seer, but no sight can see Him. He has no relation to place, time, or measure."

## IX

The spirit in which the Supreme Being is conceived of is responsible for the diverse devotional moods and mental states for approaching and realising God. He is generally approached :

(1) In the mood and spirit of *'Ubudiat* i.e., rendering active service to God in the spirit of the master and servant or the creator and his creature. In this mood the spirit of serfdom is the predominant feature of devotion. It corresponds to the idea of the Liege-lord and Serf in Christianity and the *Dasya* mood of the Vaishnavite sect.

(2) In the mood and spirit of *Taslim* i.e., performing devotion in humility and tranquillity of the mind with the spirit of entire resignation to the will of God, and patiently seeking His grace and pleasure without a murmur in adversity, or elation in prosperity. It resembles the mood of *Santa-bhakti* of the Vaishnavites.

(3) In the mood and spirit of *Yari* i.e., as a loving friend or True Darling (*janan-i-Haqiqi*). This is the mood in which the *Sufis* try to be in fellowship with God or to draw near to Him through their devotion. It corresponds to the *Sakhya* form of *Bhakti*.

(4) In the mood and spirit of *Isha* or *Muhabbat* i.e., approaching God through impersonal love as the Lover



and the Beloved. This is the favourite mood of worship and devotion with the *Sufi* fraternity. It corresponds to the idea of the impersonal love of the Bride and Bridegroom of the Christian Mystics, and with that of *Kanta-bhakti* of the Vaishnava sect.

The conception of God as a Loving Friend and True Darling has furnished the *Sufi* poets an endless theme for beautiful lyrics, charming love sonnets and rapturous rhapsodies for describing the Eternal Beauty and Impersonal Love of God. The *Sufi* poet sings in exaltation :

"Every particle that I see I see in it Thy  
beauty,  
In every place that I walk, it leads me  
to Thy lane."

To the metaphysical conception of God as pure and perfect Being and the ethical conception of God as the Eternally Holy, the *Sufi* superadds another conception which may be regarded as the key-note of all mysticism. To the *Ahl-i-Tasawwuf* (the people of mystic doctrine) God above all else is the Eternal Beauty (*Husn-i-Azal*) and the True Beloved (*janan-i-Haqiqi*). To approach God through impersonal love (*Ishq-i-Haqiqi*) and to get the realisation of His beauty is the solicitude of the *Sufi*. Jami sings of the Eternal Beauty in the following strain :

"In solitude where Being signless dwelt,  
And all the Universe still dormant lay  
Concealed in selflessness, one Being was  
Except from "I or Thouness" and apart  
From all duality; Beauty Supreme  
Unmanifest except unto Itself.  
By Its own light, yet fraught with power  
to charm

The souls of all; concealed in the unseen,  
An Essence pure, unstained by aught of ill."

The poet then gives a warning to the lover of beauty and says :

"Beware! say not "He is all-Beautiful,  
And we are His lovers." Thou art but  
the glass,  
And He the face confronting it, which casts  
Its image on the mirror. He alone  
Is manifest, and thou in truth art hid.  
Pure Love like Beauty coming but  
from Him  
Reveals itself in thee. If steadfastly  
Thou canst regard, thou wilt at length  
perceive  
He is the mirror also—He alike  
The Treasure and the Casket.

"I" and "Thou"  
Have here no place, and are but  
phantasies  
Vain and unreal. Silence! for this tale  
Is endless, and no eloquence hath power  
To speak of Him. 'Tis best for us to love  
And suffer silently, being as nought."

Then the poet points out how to approach God through the impersonal love and says :

"Be thou the thrall of love, make  
this thine object ;  
For this one thing seemeth to wise  
men worthy  
Be thou love's thrall, that thou  
may'st win thy Freedom.  
Bear on thy breast its brand, that  
thou may'st blithe be.  
Love's wine will warm thee, and  
will steal thy senses;  
All else is soulless stupor and self-seeking.  
Though in this world a hundred  
tasks thou triest  
'Tis love alone which from thyself  
will save thee.  
Riven from earthly love thy face avert not,  
Since to the Real it may serve to  
raise thee."

(concluded)

"Whether we call it Vedantism or any ism, the truth is that Advaitism is the last word of religion and thought and the only position from which one can look upon all religious and sects with love. . . . On the other hand, our experience is that if ever the followers of any religion approached to this equality in an appreciable degree in the plane of workaday life, . . . it is those of Islam and Islam alone. . . . For our own motherland a junction of the two great systems, Hinduism and Islam—Vedanta brain and Islam body—is the only hope.—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

## MAYA

By M. B. C.

A little boy made a paper boat and sailed it in a shallow tin tub. Then he made some little tiny dolls to ride in it. Then he made himself tiny too and got into the boat. He was tired and went to sleep.

His mother came, and just in fun stirred up a storm in the tub and blew on the boat. His companions woke him saying, "Master, we perish."\*

He stood up and said, "Please stop, Mother, they are frightened," and the storm ceased.

By and by he resumed his own size. A little later still he made his doll friends like himself. Then they laughed at their fears in the boat.

In the evening twilight the mother put all of them to bed, and they slept without dreaming.

## PRACTICE OF RELIGION

By ANANDA

ON THE THRESHOLD

For a long time yet, we have to play the double game. It is not to be understood that even when one has overcome *tamas* and acquired fineness of perception or is unselfish and serviceful, one can give up all worldly quests and devote oneself solely to religious life. Alas, alas, it is too difficult a life to be so easily accessible. A serious practice of religion must in most cases be begun along with worldly life. That is to say, we must not give up external activities all on a sudden. The mind will stubbornly refuse to embrace religion at once and completely. So it is necessary that we gradually wean the mind from its accustomed conditions.

On the threshold of religious life, we have to be very cautious about two points: (1) whether our desire for religion is genuine or only a "false hunger"; and (2) if we shall be able to continue our religious pursuit with undimmed enthusiasm to the last.

The desire for religion can be conveniently called *Vairāgya*. Without *Vairāgya* there can be no religion. What is *Vairāgya*? It is the detachment from worldly things and joys and desire for the spiritual. Not only should our mind not wish for earthly things, it must also conceive an instinctive dislike for them. And there must at the same time be a hankering for God. Of course in the beginning, that hankering may not be quite explicit and the object of that hankering quite definite. But there must be a dissatisfaction and an uneasiness. Existing conditions must prove uncomfortable and distasteful. This is the sign. This nausea may come suddenly or may come imperceptibly. Those who are regular and sincere in the observances of ritualistic religion and daily prayers, will find themselves, some of them, gradually being led to the borders of finer

\* The Bible, *Luke*, 8.24.

regions attended with a higher consciousness and joy. And the mind having glimpsed them from afar will be filled with a nostalgic fervour for those higher states. With them the desire will grow slowly and steadily. But the higher consciousness may also come suddenly.

Here we have to be very careful. The sudden desire for religion may be also adventitious merely, occasioned by a bereavement, disappointment or disease. It may be that a dear one has died. The mind may react violently and may conceive the world to be unreal. It often happens that under such circumstances, people take to religion and sometimes put on the ochre cloth and become mendicants. Not that such steps are absolutely wrong. Sometimes it happens that some emotional shock rends asunder our bondage and does us permanent spiritual good. But more often we only yield to the momentary feeling. That religion and renunciation would only be false. And after some wandering, we shall return home and surrender ourselves to the joys of the flesh with a redoubled vigour. It is then a simple waste of time and energy. We must not, under those extraordinary conditions, take any decisive measures. We must stick to the forms of the old life. That does not mean that we are to crush and starve out the religious fervour that we may then feel. By all means we should feed it. We should certainly become as much religious in thought and practice as possible, but we must not take any extreme step. For religion, cultivated under any circumstances, for any length of time, must prove beneficial. But extreme measures are not good. They will mean, when the reaction sets in, also an extreme revulsion of feeling.

So far about Vairagya due to bereavement. But the Vairagya caused by worldly failure or disease, is still more despicable. You meet with such

people in real life. The best thing they can do is to try their utmost in their natural lines. They must strive more vigorously for wealth and position and not run after God. And if they are diseased, the physician should be their foremost God.

When, therefore, one feels inclined to devote oneself to religion, one must carefully enquire into one's motive. The mind is a great deceiver and it can very cleverly camouflage the most sordid motives with golden tints. We must find out the real conditions after long and careful observation. If we find that our Vairagya is genuine, we may hopefully take to the next steps. But if our enquiry reveals a suspicious state of things, the best course for us would be to continue the old life, till all dross has been eventually eliminated. It is extremely dangerous to build the spiritual life on doubtful foundations. *We shall have to pay very dearly afterwards.* The basis must be very well laid without any weakness anywhere. On that alone the spiritual life may be really built.

When we have found our spiritual hankering to be genuine, our next step should be to judge the strength of that hankering. Much depends on a correct determination of this. For according to the strength of our hankering, the mode of our life will have to be chosen. If it is expected to last through life, the best course for us would be to formally renounce the world. But if we are not sure of such permanency, we must not so renounce. We must continue in the world, tasting its sweets and bitters, till our mind has become sufficiently pure.

One mistake is often made by the young. The young have a comparatively pure mind. Naturally when the first ebullition of spiritual enthusiasm comes, they give up their daily routine work and avidly surrender themselves to it. The students neglect their study. Others, again, their household duties. At first this derelict-

tion does not seem harmful. But in the long run, in most cases, the result is decidedly bad. Students especially should be very careful. So long as the mind is fresh, spiritual emotions seem to be all in all ; and the use and need of intellectual culture seem too much mundane. But when they enter the world, face its stern realities and receive their cruel buffets, they feel extremely weak in the mind and find that they have wasted their student days. Repentance follows. Life then does not seem helpful enough. We have seen many bright student lives being thus wasted. When they feel any hankering for spiritual truths, students should in all cases try to harmonise it with their regular duties. They must never allow their emotions to run riot and upset the even course of their life. Such discipline, though apparently a check to enthusiasm, will in fact strengthen our desire for spirituality and heighten our emotions. May be we shall renounce the world after our student days. Intellectual discipline and knowledge will prove very useful even in the pure life of religion. It at least teaches us rigorous habits without which spiritual life is a mockery. And if perchance we enter the world, the knowledge and efficiency acquired will prove an asset, and there will not be any break between the life of the world and our spiritual life.

One point we must very clearly and deeply impress on our mind : Spiritual life is a very slow uphill work, it is a cruel grinding, and is for eternity. Somehow most of us have the idea, though maybe subconscious, that spirituality is something to be acquired

in a brief space of time and then a long holiday with leisured enjoyment. Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty. Spiritual life is for all eternity, that is to say, there is no such holiday as we contemplate. The same high tone of mind has to be eternally maintained. It can never be relaxed. The same watchfulness, the same caution, and the same rigours. So we have to prepare ourselves as one facing capital punishment,--there will not be any revocation and return. That grim calmness is a *sine qua non*. If we remember this fact, we shall not allow our mind to be content only with the pleasurable action or emotion. We shall feel that the training of mind to regular habits is more urgent in spiritual life than indulgence in superfine emotions. Young people should carefully remember this and guard themselves accordingly.

Naturally it will be found that not all who feel spiritual longings are fit or destined to renounce the world or devote themselves exclusively to religion. Most of them will have to continue the culture of spirituality along with worldly avocations. They will have to play the double game. They will have to so perform their worldly duties that they may not prove antagonistic to their spiritual life and may, on the other hand, prove helpful. Of course this problem and its solution will be different with different sets of people. The problem of the married will be of a different kind to that of the unmarried. The solution also will be different in each case. We shall discuss these points in a future article.

## THE BAÜLS AND THEIR CULT OF MAN

By KSHITIMOHAN SEN

Baül means madcap, from *bāyu* (Skt. Vāyu) in its sense of nerve-current, and has become the appellation of a set of people who do not conform to

established social usage. Some try to derive the name Baül from *bāyu* in its other meaning of air-current, on the supposition that in the cult of the

That is why, brother, I became  
a madcap Bául.  
No master I obey, nor injunctions,  
canons or customs,—  
Now no men-made distinctions  
have any hold on me,—  
And I revel only in the gladness  
of my own welling love.  
In love there's no separation,  
but commingling always,  
So I rejoice in song and dance  
with each and all.

Within the devotee is the paper on

which the scriptures are written in letters of Life. But few care to read them; they turn a deaf ear to the message of the heart.

Most Indian sects adopt some distinct way of keeping the hairs of head and face as a sign of their sect or order. Therefore, so as to avoid being dragged into any such distinctions, the Bāüls allow hair and beard and moustache to grow freely. Thus do we remain simple, they say. The similar practice of the Sikhs in this matter is to be noted. Neither do the Bāüls believe that lack of clothing or bareness of body conduce to religious merit. According to them the whole body should be kept decently covered. Hence their long robe, for which if they cannot afford a new piece of cloth, they gather rags and make it of patches. In this they are different from the ascetic *sansyāsins*, but resemble rather the Buddhist monks.

The Bāüls do not believe in aloofness from, or renunciation of, any person or thing; their central idea is *yoga*, attachment to and communion with the divine and its manifestations, as the means of realisation. We fail to recognise the temple of God in the bodily life of man, they explain, because its lamp is not alight. The true vision must be attained in which this temple will become manifest in each and every human body, whereupon mutual communion and worship will spontaneously arise. Truth cannot be communicated to those on whom you look down. You must be able to see the divine light that shines within them, for it is your own lack of vision that makes all seem dark.

Kabir says the same thing:

In every abode the light doth shine: it is you who are blind that cannot see. When by dint of looking and looking you at length can discern it, the veils of this world will be torn asunder (II—33). It is because the devotee is not in communion that he says the goal is far away (II—34).

Many such similarities are to be observed between the saying of the Bāüls and those of the Upper Indian devotees

of the Middle Ages, but unlike the case of the followers of the latter, the Bāüls did not become crystallised into any particular order or religious organisation. So, in the Bāüls of Bengal, there is to be found a freedom and independence of mind and spirit that resists all attempt at definition. Their songs have given expression to the very heart of rural Bengal. With no claims to erudition or prestige of tradition, the spiritual heights attained by these social outcasts are yet rare even in the highest of religious orders. Their songs are unique in courage and felicity of expression. But under modern conditions, they are becoming extinct or at best holding on to external features bereft of their original speciality. It would be a great pity if no record of their achievements should be kept before their culture is lost to the world.

Though the Bāüls count amongst their following a variety of sects and castes, both Hindu and Moslem, chiefly coming from the lower social ranks, they refuse to give any other account of themselves to the questioner than that they are Bāüls. They acknowledge none of the social or religious formalities, but delight in the ever-changing play of life, which cannot be expressed in mere words, but of which something may be captured in song, through the ineffable medium of rhythm and tune.

Their songs are passed on from Master to disciple, the latter when competent adding others of his own, but, as already mentioned, they are never recorded in book form. Their replies to questions are usually given by singing appropriate selections from these songs. If asked the reason why, they say: "We are like birds. We do not walk on our legs, but fly with our wings."

There was a Brahmin of Bikrampur, known as Chhaku Thákur, who was the disciple of a Bāül of the *Samasudra* caste (accounted one of the lowest) and hence had lost his place in his own community. When admonished to be



For behold, I ever abide by the side  
of my Friend!  
Mad would I become, had I dwelt afar,  
not knowing Him.  
There's no worship in Mosque or  
Temple or special holy day.  
At every step I have my Mecca and  
Kashi, sacred is every moment.

If a Báül is asked the age of his cult, —whether it comes before or after this one or that,—he says: "Only the artificial religions of the world are limited by time. Our *Sahaj* (simple, natural) religion is timeless, it has neither beginning nor end, it is of all time." The religion of the Upanishads and Puranas, even that of the Vedas, is according to them artificial. In this there appears to be an element of profound truth.

Báüls who have a smattering of the scriptures say that in the first three Vedas, traces of this *Sahaj* religion are to be found, while as for the Atharva Veda, it is full of it. They claim further that the followers of the *Sahaj* cult of the Báüls are specially referred to in the Vedas under the name *Nivartīya* or *Niryūdiya*, being described as those who conform to no accepted doctrines, but to whom, having known the truth in its purity, all directions are free. Not bound by prescribed rites or ceremonials, but, in active communion with all by virtue of their wealth of the natural, they are ever mobile. I have, as a matter of fact, found in the Atharva Veda many references to the *Vrātyas* (which may be translated as *non-conformists*) in these identical terms. I give a few examples:

The *Vrātya* is ever mobile. He made even Prajapati mobile (I, 15, 1).

The *Vrātya* was active in all directions (I, 15, 2).

The *Vrātya* went forth in all directions, and with him went all else (I, 15, 6).

Full of *rasa* (emotion), mobile and independent, the *Vrātya* entered the world, and there remained as a sea of flowing *rasa* (I, 15, 7).

The *Vrātya* went amongst men, and with him went the leaders and the assemblies, the braves and the armies.

The Atharva is also full of enigmatic verses similar to the sayings of the Báüls:

The wise one who has known Brahma, he alone knows the whole of language. Ordinary men use only a part of it (IX, 15, 27).

There is a truth inherent in the phenomenal world, in ignorance of which the heart knows not bliss. In search of this truth do the waters ever flow (X, 7, 37).

Man is a wondrous temple. When it was made, the Gods came and took shelter therein (XI, 10, 18).

The Báüls say: In the body is the essence of the world: in the world the essence of the cosmos. In the *Mahī Sukta* of the Atharva (12, 1) and also in several other *suktas* (5,1 ; 7,1 ; 8,9 ; 9,14 ; 9,15 ; etc.), we have wonderful expressions of the mystery of creation in similar cryptic terms, which may serve to throw light on many of the Báül sayings.

The Báüls claim that from the eternal *Sahaj* religion the Vedas have but culled some of its truths. But they repudiate the suggestion that it is they who are indebted for their inspiration to these scriptures; for, as they say, what have ignoramuses like them to do with scriptures? They further assert that Vasistha, Nārada and other well-known Vedic seers, all pursued the mystic path of this *Sahaj* religion that permeates the world, and has yielded some of its truths to each and every religious sect. When, for instance, Nityānanda joined the ranks of Chaitanya's followers, he brought into Vaishnavism many of the *Sahaj* truths, for he belonged to that cult. His son, Birbhadra, was a Báül. The Báüls freely make use of texts from the first portion of the *Chaitanya Charitāmrita*, the authoritative Vaishnava work by Krishnadas, an initiate of Nityananda's branch; for, say they, though his attempt was to compose an orthodox treatise, many *Sahaj* truths crept in, such as are not to be expected from a mere Vaishnava.



The Vaishnavas, the wandering sects of whom have a superficial resemblance to the Báüls, have not been able to attain to their catholicity of spirit, their power of making every religion their own, and therefore despise them as lacking in proper restraint and self-respect. 'The latter, in turn, look down on the former as people to be pitied. "Had these Vaishnavas the understanding, they would have known better," say the Báüls. "Chandidas, Vidyapati and others were good Vaishnava poets simply because they had glimpses of *Sahaj* ideas,—but are their followers competent to understand their message? They took the idea of Rádhá from us, but have dragged her down to the level of their low desires. Devoid of the realisation of the simple, their minds, obsessed with the complexities of their literature, fail to do justice to the wealth they had inherited. At best they make an attempt at simplicity and naturalness in their songs and festivals, but in their lives, their temples, their religious observances, they are unable to get free of the shackles of their scriptures. They have made a jumble of love and desire, the workings of the spirit and the inclinations of the senses. They have not the courage to realise that Jagannáth, the Lord of the World, is everywhere, and that His class-destroying festival is for ever being held. So they cannot live up to the height of the words they use."

Having no faith in scriptures, the followers of the *Sahaj* cult believe only in living religious experiences. Truth, according to them, has two aspects, inert and living. Confined to itself truth has no value for man. It becomes priceless when embodied in a living personality. The conversion of the inert into living truth by the devotee, they compare to the conversion into milk by the cow of its fodder, or the conversion by the tree of dead matter into fruit. He who has this power of making truth living, is the *Guru* or Master. Such *Gurus*

they hold in special reverence, for the eternal and all-pervading truth can only be brought to man's door by passing through his life.

The *Guru* is the past, the disciple the future, and the initiation the present, according to the Báüls. Past, present and future are thus synthesised in the communion of Master and disciple. The Master as well as the disciple have likewise two aspects. The one is spiritual (*chinmaya*), the other earthly or worldly (*mrinnaya*). The true initiation takes place when their spiritual aspects come into mutual communion. The mere physical proximity of their worldly aspects produces no result. The woman devotee, Khema, says:

If for years and years you hold on to the earthy part (of your *Guru*) leaving out the spirit, you will gain neither faith, nor reverence, nor wisdom.

In the Indian religious cults only one *Guru* is ordinarily presupposed. The Tantrics acknowledge two, who give respectively intellectual and spiritual initiation. But in the *Sahaj* view such limitation of the number of *Gurus* results in narrowness of realisation. Dádu indicates this in a verse of salutation:

Dádu first salutes the colourless

Supreme Person,

Next, as the means of understanding Him,  
he salutes his *Guru* as divine.

And then he transcends the bounds of  
salutation, by offering reverence to  
all devotees.

In the *Chaitanya Charitámrita* the salutations are to *gurus* in the plural. The author, Krishnadas, makes his initial obeisance to his six *gurus*. This *Sahaj* idea finds expression in the Tantras:

As the bee in quest of honey flits from  
flower to flower,  
So do thou gather wisdom by going  
from *guru* to *guru*.

The Báül puts it thus:

By what path comest thou, O *Guru*,  
the mystery I cannot solve,  
So it passeth my understanding where  
to leave my obeisance.

According to the Bâüls, initiation is a life-long process, to be gained little by little, from all kinds of *gurus*. On the occasion of one of their festivals a friend of mine happened to ask a Bâül about his *guru*, to which he received this characteristic reply :

Wouldst thou make obeisance to thy *guru*, my heart?

He is there at every step, on each side of thy path,—for numberless are thy *gurus*.

To which of them, then, wouldst thou make obeisance, my heart?

The welcome offered to thee is thy *guru*, the agony inflicted on thee is thy *guru*,

Every wrench at thy heart-strings is thy *guru*, that maketh the tears to flow.

My baffled friend tried again by asking the same Bâül from whom he first received initiation. Then came the song :

The day I was born I received my first initiation,

With one-syllabled mantram I begged my mother's grace.

The tears of a mother, the milk of a mother, my life from my mother, And withal my mother's training I received.

Not a breath have I drawn but I gained initiation,—that's my firm conviction.

The conclusion to which they come is that the *guru* is within.

The *guru* who is the fount of wisdom resides in thine own home.

A great mistake hast thou made by giving heed to the teachings of all the world.

And again :

The voice from the depths tells thee that the *guru* is in the lotus of the heart.

O distraught! Cease from thy turmoil,—there the darkness-killing light doth shine.

So also Kabir :

The Supreme Self, the *Guru*, abideth near to thee

Awake, awake, O my heart. (II, 20).

Not that the Bâüls do not admit any outward *guru*, but he is a danger to be feared, they feel, as well as a help to be sought ; for, if he imposes himself

on his disciple, he kills the latter's own spirit,—a murder worse than the killing of the body.

The lamp gives light from afar, still further away the sun.

The *guru* gives light without heat who sits aloof in the truth.

So, say the Bâüls, the *guru* should minister to his disciple from his distance :

The bird fosters its young under its wing, the fish keeps its fry at its side,

But the turtle hatches its eggs in the sand from afar,—this the wise *Guru* well knows.

The Bâüls also call the *guru*, *sûnya* (lit. nothing, emptiness) not implying the absence of substance, but the spaciousness of freedom. The luminous expanse of the sky above means more to the sprouting seed than the material of the ground below. That *Sûnya* is not used in its negative meaning is clearly evident by its being also applied by them to the Supreme Being.

Dâdu has the same conception :

What name can be given to Him who is Nothing?

Whatever name we use is less than the Truth.

And again :

In *Sûnya* doth Brahm, the formless, the colourless, abide.

And Dâdu has beheld, bewildered, the dazzling light that is there.

Sundardâs has used the term *Sûnya* in the sense of the Supreme Peace in which the devotee loses himself.

The Bâüls say that emptiness of time and space is required for a playground. That is why God has preserved an emptiness in the heart of man, for the sake of His own play of Love. Therefore the *guru* who is *sûnya* "fosters but pesters not." So far for the mystic theory. In practice, as we have seen, the Bâüls pay high reverence to their *gurus*.

Our wise and learned ones were content with finding in Brahma the *tat* (lit. that,—the ultimate substance). The Bâüls, not being Pandits, do not

profess to understand all this to-do about *thatness*, they want a Person. So their God is the Man of the Heart (*manêr mânush*) sometimes simply the Man (*purush*). This Man of the Heart is ever and anon lost in the turmoil of things. Whilst He is revealed within, no worldly pleasures can give satisfaction. Their sole anxiety is the finding of this Man. The Bâül sings :

Ah, where am I to find him, the Man of my Heart

Alas, since I lost Him, I wander in search of Him, thro' lands near and far.

The agony of separation from Him cannot be mitigated for them by learning or philosophy :

Oh these words and words, my mind would none of them,

The Supreme Man it must and shall discover!

So long as Him I do not see, these mists slake not my thirst.

\*

Mad am I, for lack of that Man I madly run about,

For his sake the world I've left; for Bishá naught else will serve.

This Bishá was a *bhuiñ-máli* by caste, disciple of Balá, the *Kaivarta*.

This cult of the Man is only to be found in the Vedas hidden away in the Purusha-sukta (A.V.19.6). It is more freely expressed by the Upper Indian devotees of the Middle Ages. It is all in all with the Bâüls. The God whom these illiterate outcasts seek so simply and naturally in their lives, is obscured by the accredited Religious Leaders in philosophical systems and terminology, in priesthood and ceremonial, in institutions and temples. Hence their lament :

Thy path, O Lord, is hidden by mosque and temple.

Thy call I hear, but priest and *guru* stop the way.

What gives peace to my heart, sets but the world ablaze,

The cult of the One dies in the conflict of the many,—

Its door closed by the locks of Koran, Puran and rosary.

Even the way of renunciation is full of tribulation, wherefore weeps Madan in despair.

Kabir has the following observations on this point :

You refuse the pure water that is before you,

Waiting to drink until you have dug a reservoir!

\*

The Smriti, daughter of the Vedas, has come to bind you in unbreakable shackles.

\*

The hedge that you put round the fields is itself exhausting their soil.

\*

Those who know all the rest have their heaven and hell,

Those who know God have neither.

Dádu thus extols the followers of the simple way :

They trouble not about Life and Death, they hide not in the forest,

They shirk not the touch of water or wind, with Him they ever abide.

Neither confined to the home, nor wandering abroad,

They torture not the body, but are attuned to the wise *guru's* mind.

Not satisfied with the *avatárs* (incarnations of God) mentioned in the scriptures, the Bâül sings :

As we look on every creature, we find each to be His *avatar*.

What can you teach us of His ways? in ever-new play He wondrously revels.

And Kabir also tells us :

All see the Eternal One, but only the devotee, in his solitude, recognises Him.

A friend of mine was once much impressed by the reply of a Bâül who was asked why his robe was not tinted with ascetic ochre :

Can the colour show outside, unless the inside is first tintured?

Can the fruit attain ripe sweetness by the painting of its skin?

This aversion of the Bâül from outward marks of distinction is also shared by the Upper Indian devotees, as we have elsewhere noticed.

(To be continued)

## ASHTAVAKRA SAMHITA

By SWAMI NITYASWARUPANANDA

ज्ञानं ज्ञेयं तथा ज्ञाता त्रितयं नास्ति वास्तवम् ।

अज्ञानाद्वाति यत्रेदं सोऽहमस्मि निरञ्जनः ॥ १५ ॥

ज्ञानं Knowledge ज्ञेयं knowable तथा as well as ज्ञाता knower त्रितयं triad वास्तवं in reality न not अस्ति is यत्र where इदं this ( त्रितयं triad ) अज्ञानात् through ignorance भाति appears निरञ्जनः stainless सः that अहं I अस्मि am.

15. Knowledge,<sup>1</sup> knower and knowable—these three do not in reality exist. I am that stainless<sup>2</sup> (Self) in which this triad appears through ignorance.

[1 *Knowledge etc.*—The universe from the epistemological standpoint consists of these three elements—the knower, the object of knowledge and the act of knowledge. We consider ourselves through *maya* or ignorance as the first of these three,—the knower. In reality we are above all these three. We are not a factor of this triad, but That itself on which this triad rests,—the Brahman. Supreme realisation consists in breaking the tangle of this triad and going beyond it.

2 *Stainless*—Because all stain-bondage and limitation—arises out of relative knowledge and I am really beyond all relative knowledge.]

द्वैतमूलमहो दुःखं नान्यत्तस्यास्ति मेषजम् ।

दृश्यमेतन्मृषा सर्वं एकोऽहं चिद्रसोऽमलः ॥ १६ ॥

अहो Oh दुःखं misery द्वैतमूलं having duality as root ( अस्ति is ) अहं I एकः one चित् intelligence रसः bliss अमलः pure ( अस्मि am ) एतत् this सर्वं all दृश्यं visible object मृषा unreal ( भवति is इति बोधात् except this knowledge ) तस्य of that ( दुःखस्य of misery ) अन्यत् other मेषजं remedy न not अस्ति is.

16. Oh, duality<sup>1</sup> is the root of misery. There is no other remedy for it except the realisation that all objects of experience are false and that I am one and pure, intelligence and bliss.

[1 *Duality etc.*—All miseries of men can be classified under three heads, viz., those that pertain to body and mind, those that are caused by animate and inanimate objects, and those that are occasioned by supernatural powers.

These causes of misery exist only so long as I consider that I am limited and there are other existences beside me. The moment I feel myself as the One, these vanish. Hence the consciousness of duality has been called the root of all misery. In fact the so-called objective existences are unreal. Only so long as I consider myself the knower, the object of knowledge exists. But when I realise myself as the Absolute, I am no longer the knower and there is no more any knowable.]

बोधमात्रोऽहमज्ञानादुपाधिः कल्पितो मया ।

एष विमृशतो नित्यं निर्विकल्पे स्थितिर्मम ॥ १७ ॥

अहं I बोधमात्रः knowledge itself ( अस्मि am ) मया by me उपाधिः limitation अज्ञानात् from ignorance कल्पितः imagined एवं in this way नित्यं constantly विमृशतः reflecting मम my निर्विकल्पे in the undifferentiated स्थितिः abiding ( प्रजाता has been ).

17. I am pure intelligence. Through ignorance I have imposed limitation<sup>1</sup> (upon myself). Constantly reflecting in this way, I am abiding in the Absolute.<sup>2</sup>

[1 *Limitation*—viz., egoism, mind, body, etc.

2 *Absolute*—where duality vanishes and the Self shines in its pristine glory.]

न मे बन्धोऽस्ति मोक्षो वा भ्रान्तिः शान्ता निराश्रया ।

अहो मयि स्थितं विश्वं वस्तुतो न मयि स्थितम् ॥ १८ ॥

मे My बन्धः bondage न not भ्रान्तिः is मोक्षः liberation वा or ( न not भ्रान्तिः is ) भ्रान्तिः illusion निराश्रया without support ( स्थिति being ) ज्ञाना has ceased अहो O मयि in me स्थितं existing विश्वं universe वस्तुतः in reality मयि in me न not स्थितम् existing.

18. I have neither<sup>1</sup> bondage nor freedom. The illusion<sup>2</sup> having lost its support has ceased. Oh, the universe,<sup>3</sup> though existing in me, does not in reality so exist.

[1 *Neither etc.*—The Atman is eternally free. It is never really bound, it only appears to be so.

2 *Illusion etc.*—We think ourselves bound and seek liberation. This is only an illusion which has its basis in the ignorance of our true nature. When by constantly reflecting on the pure nature of the Self this ignorance is destroyed, the illusion loses its support and vanishes.

3 *Universe etc.*—When from the relative standpoint the universe is considered to exist, it has its basis in me who am Brahman itself. But from the absolute standpoint, there is no universe. I alone am.]

सशरीरमिदं विश्वं न किञ्चिदिति निश्चितम् ।

शुद्धचिन्मात्र आत्मा च तत्कस्मिन् कल्पनाधुना ॥ १९ ॥

इदं This सशरीरं with the body विश्वं universe न not किञ्चिद् anything आत्मा Atman शुद्धचिन्मात्रः pure intelligence alone च and ( भवति is ) इति this ( मया by me ) निश्चितं known for certain तत् so अधुना now कस्मिन् on which कल्पना superimposition (स्थानं can be).

19. I have known for certain that the body and the universe are nothing and that the Atman is only pure intelligence. So on which now<sup>1</sup> can superimposition<sup>2</sup> be possible?

[1 *Now*—When ignorance has been destroyed.

2 *Superimposition*—i.e., of the universe and the body.]

शरीरं स्वर्गनरको बन्धमोक्षौ भयं तथा ।

कल्पनामात्रमेवेतत् किं मे कार्यं चिदात्मनः ॥ २० ॥

शरीरं Body स्वर्गनरको heaven and hell बन्धमोक्षौ bondage and freedom तथा as also भयं fear एतत् this ( सर्वे all ) कल्पनामात्रं mere imagination एव surely ( भवति is ) चिदात्मनः whose nature is intelligence मया my ( एतेन सर्वेषु with all these ) किं what कार्यम् to be done.

20. Body, heaven and hell, bondage and freedom, as also fear, all these are mere imagination. What have I to do with all these—I whose nature is *Chit*?

[The idea is: So long as we consider body, heaven, hell, etc. to be real, we are impelled to act in relations to them. But the nature of the Self is absolute knowledge; and only within relative knowledge the ideas of heaven, hell, etc. are possible. Therefore these have no reality to one who has attained Self-knowledge; and such an one has nothing to do by them.]

अहो जनसमूहेऽपि न द्वैतं पश्यतो मम ।

अरण्यमिव संवृत्तं क्व रतिं करवाण्यहम् ॥ २१ ॥

अहो O हेतं duality न not पश्यतः seeing मम my जनसमूहं in the multitude of human beings अपि even अरण्यं wilderness इव as if संवृत्तं become अहं I क्व where रतिं attachment करवाणि should do.

21. O, I do not find any duality. Even the multitude of human beings, therefore, has become like a wilderness.<sup>1</sup> What<sup>2</sup> should I attach myself to?

[1 Wilderness—In the wilderness we feel absolutely alone. The consciousness of aloneness comes to one who has reached the Advaita state. Though apparently there may be a crowd of men, really he is conscious only of the One.

2 What etc.—Janaka has now nothing to do not only with heaven, hell, etc. but also with this world, society, etc.]

नाहं देहो न मे देहो जीवो नाहमहं हि चित् ।

अयमेव हि मे बन्ध आसीत् या जीविते स्पृहा ॥ २२ ॥

अहं I देहः body न not मे my देहः body न not अहं I जीवः finite self न not अहं I हि surely चित् intelligence जीविते to life या that स्पृहा desire ( आसीत् was ) अयं this एव alone हि surely मे my बन्धः bondage आसीत् was.

22. Neither am I this body, nor is this body mine. I am not *Jiva*,<sup>1</sup> I am *Chit*. This indeed was my bondage<sup>2</sup> that I had thirst for life.

[1 *Jiva*—refers to finite self. The Self identifying itself with egoism etc. is designated as *Jiva*.

2 *Bondage etc.*—The Self is *Chit* and therefore beyond birth and death. Hence to desire to live is to deny our real nature. This ignorance is bondage.]

अहो भुवनकल्लोलैर्विचित्रैर्द्राक् समुत्थितम् ।

मय्यनन्तमहाम्मोघौ चित्तवाते समुद्यते ॥ २३ ॥

अहो O अनन्तमहाम्मोघौ in the limitless ocean मयि in me चित्तवाते the wind of the mind समुद्यते rising ( मति being ) विचित्रैः diverse भुवनकल्लोलैः waves of worlds द्राक् immediately समुत्थितम् are produced.

23. Oh, in me, the limitless ocean, diverse waves of worlds are produced forthwith on the rising of the wind of the mind.

[The Self has been likened to a limitless ocean where waves are produced when there is wind. There is no creation in the infinite Self. It is only when through ignorance egoism etc. come into existence that the manifold universe seems to present itself.

The material of all worlds is the Self itself, just as the waters that make the waves are the ocean itself. The wind creates forms; similarly it is mind that gives form to the formless *Chit*.]

मय्यनन्तमहाम्मोघौ चित्तवाते प्रशाम्यति ।

अभाग्याज्जीववणिजो जगत्पोतो विनश्वरः ॥ २४ ॥

अनन्तमहाम्मोघौ In the limitless ocean मयि in me चित्तवाते the wind of the mind प्रशाम्यति ceasing जीववणिजः of the embodied self, the त्रार्क जगत्पोतः the ark of the universe अभाग्यान् through misfortune विनश्वरः apt to be destroyed ( भवति becomes ).

24. With the calming of the wind of the mind in the infinite ocean of myself, the ark of the universe of Jiva<sup>1</sup> the trader, unfortunately meets<sup>2</sup> destruction.

[1 *Jiva etc.*—Jiva is a trader; his *karmas* are his commerce; and good and bad fruits are his profit and loss. The world is his merchantman in which he carries on his trade.

<sup>2</sup> *Meets destruction*—vanishes. The universe and the Jiva manifest themselves with the manifestation of the mind. With the destruction of the latter, the former are also destroyed.]

मय्यनन्तमहामोघावाश्चर्यं जीववीचयः ।

उद्यन्ति घ्नन्ति खेलन्ति प्रविशन्ति स्वभावतः ॥ २५ ॥

आश्चर्यं Wonderful अनन्तमोघावाशो in the limitless ocean मयि in me जीववीचयः the waves of individual selves स्वभावतः according to their nature उद्यन्ति rise घ्नन्ति strike खेलन्ति play प्रविशन्ति enter (च and ).

25. How wonderful! In me, the shoreless ocean, the waves of individual selves rise, strike (each other), play (for a time) and disappear,<sup>1</sup> each according<sup>2</sup> to its nature.

[1 *Disappear*—When ignorance is destroyed and *Karma* is worked out.

<sup>2</sup> *According etc.*—according to the state of the ignorance and *karmas* of the Jivas.]

## NOTES AND COMMENTS.

### In This Number.

This month's instalment of *Unpublished Letters of Swami Vivekananda* sounds a warning against the modern tendency to fuse God and the world. The core of all religions is the longing to realise That by attaining which man wants nothing else. Wherever there is a desire, conscious or unconscious, to hold the world in a line with God, we may be sure that there is hidden materialism. Only when the mind hankers after God alone, in complete forgetfulness of the world, does the world appear as divine. The moment you pay ever so slight an attention to the world, you lose God. This paradox is a fundamental of all religions; but the modern mind scarcely heeds it. A few passages of the letter have been already published. But we have retained them in order to present our readers with the complete letter (as far as permissible). . . . *Hindus and Christians* is a rather imperfect report of a lecture delivered by SWAMI VIVEKANANDA at

Detroit (U. S. A.) on the 21st February, 1894. This is published in *Prabuddha Bharata* for the first time and is not included in *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* except for a few sentences in the middle. . . . *An Open Letter to Hindu Women* was written by SISTER NIVEDITA towards the end of 1902, a few months after the passing of Swami Vivekananda. Her appeal to Indian women has been the same all through her life. . . . Our article, *Will the Twain Meet?* is an attempt at discussing a generally neglected aspect of the relation of science and religion. Enough if it stimulates thought. It is our belief that if the modern spirit is to be led naturally to the spiritual vision, religion must meet science in some such way as we have described. . . . *Notes of Conversations with Swami Turiyananda* ends with this issue. The present instalment will perhaps be found most interesting by our readers, replete as it is with profound spiritual observations and interest-

ing reminiscences of the Swami's early life. We hope to begin publishing another disciple's Diary from the next issue. In that the disciple has recorded interesting conversations with many direct disciples and followers of Sri Ramakrishna, which, we are sure, will not prove less attractive than any that has been published before. . . . . SWAMI NIKHILANANDA who contributes *The Promotion of World-Peace* to this issue, is a monk of the Ramakrishna Order. The Swami presented a short paper on the same subject before the Parliament of Religions organised by the Brahmo Samaj at Calcutta towards the end of January last. The Swami suggests the preaching of Vedanta as a remedy for world-dissensions. But only individuals will really benefit, he thinks, the world itself remaining ever the same dog's curly tail. . . . . This issue concludes WAHIED HOSAIN'S *The Islamic Conception of Godhead*. We have no doubt that our non-Islamic readers have read the essay with great profit and interest. We are, however, constrained to remark that the writer has not succeeded in understanding the spirit of Advaita Vedanta. Truth is truth, however unpalatable it may be ; and uncompromising reason, all fair thinkers will admit, cannot stop short of the Absolute. It is scarcely serious criticism to say that the Absolute is irresponsive to worship and that It does not extend the helping hand of grace to weak and erring human beings. For, there are different kinds of worship and there are well-recognised modes of Advaitic worship also, and Advaita Vedanta teaches man to find succour in other ways than through the grace of God,—it teaches him to stand on his own legs and call forth the infinite power and joy lying hidden within himself. All the advantages that accrue to the devotees through dualistic worship are secured also by monists (and they secure something more),—only their stand-points, methods and explanations are different. . . . *Maya* by M. B. C. is a

little sparkling allegory. India's wisdom has reflected on a Biblical episode to reveal a deeper meaning in its heart. The writer is a Western Christian. . . . In the present instalment of *Practice of Religion*, ANANDA sounds a warning against self-deception in religion and mentions several ways in which deception may come. . . . We express our indebtedness to *The Visva-Bharati Quarterly for The Bauls and their Cult of Man* by KSHITIMOHAN SEN. Mr. Sen is a professor at the Visva-Bharati at Santiniketan and is the greatest authority on the subject he has written on. In this article, our non-Bengali, especially Western, readers will meet with an indigenous creed of Bengal, which, though circumscribed chiefly within the so-called lower and unlettered classes, professes yet some of the highest truths of spiritual life. This will give one an inkling of what deep spirituality pervades all classes of Hindu society. This spiritual permeation indeed is the strength and hope of India. . . . *Ashtavakra Samhita* by SWAMI NITYASWARUPANANDA continues as inspiring as ever. A perusal of the verses in the present issue will show how the Advaitist looks at life and reality and defies all weakness and helplessness through the realisation of the Absolute as his own self. A more rational, strengthening and solace-giving system of thought the world has not produced.

### India's Opportunity

Our dear Miss Katherine Mayo has brought out another book on India, this time in the form of stories, depicting the miserable plight of the Hindu widows and such other detectable things. We remember to have read one of her stories, which she contributed to the *Cosmopolitan* of New York and also, we think, to a popular English magazine. The story was extremely pathetic. It narrated the terrible sufferings of the Bengali widow at the hands of cruel males ; and possibly it rent the soft hearts and drew bucketfuls of tears from the eyes of our



Western sisters and brothers. We fear that as a result of the perusal of these pathetic stories, there have been some cases of heart-failure among the readers. Only *Reuter* with its convenient carelessness has failed to let us know of them. We were told that when *Mother India* was published in England, some of the greatest personages of that island lost their sleep and peace of mind and were filled with righteous indignation, so terribly affected were they by its revelations. But this time we are afraid nothing less than heart-failure could do. What is civilisation? It is unselfishness, altruism. It is thinking of others instead of oneself. So the Western nations are always thinking of the unhappy races of the East. Their responsibilities regarding them are already too heavy. Why is Miss Mayo so cruel as to add to them?

For ourselves, we look upon Miss Mayo as a heaven-sent angel. Seriously speaking, she has done great good to India. In these days, foreign propaganda is a necessary duty of all nations, especially of those which are politically and economically subject. India has not the resources to carry on such wide propaganda as the circulation of *Mother India* has been. What has been the result of Miss Mayo's propaganda? Wherever her book has gone,—and it has gone almost everywhere in Europe and America,—people have been compelled to think about India. No doubt this book spread many mischievous stories. But they were so palpably grotesque that intelligent readers everywhere felt that things were not what they seemed,—there was another side of the picture. It is reported that when Miss Mayo went to the Vassar College (one of the premier colleges for women in America) to speak on India, she only succeeded in evoking strong protests against herself from the student-audience. The girl-students in their weekly organ severely castigated the college authorities for inviting such crude persons to speak before them.

Besides, India's greatness has been vaguely known more or less in every country. *Mother India* indirectly made them know it more definitely and in details. There has been earnest enquiries about India from many countries. And as a result, good books about India have since been written. India also has not slept. Several able answers have been given. Mr. Dhan Gopal Mukerji's little book, *A Son of Mother India Answers*, has done very good propaganda in America. It ran into many editions; and as Mr. Mukerji enjoys considerable reputation as a writer and speaker in America, his book created a good impression wherever it reached. But the best reply has been undoubtedly *Unhappy India* by the lion-hearted Lajpat Rai whose passing at this juncture of our history we still mourn. *Unhappy India* is indeed a crushing reply. Our brothers and sisters of the other side, after having read this book, now talk a little more carefully about India and have given up their erstwhile self-righteous attitude. In fact, it may be quite correctly said that India has triumphed gloriously in this contest. Now even worse calumnies against her will not hold water. It may be that the unthinking masses have been and will be prejudiced against India. What does it matter what fools think? India surely does not wait on the pleasure of the ignorant masses of any country for her salvation. The opinions of the thinking men and women she surely values, and these she has decidedly won in her favour.

It has been suggested that the Government of India should proscribe Miss Mayo's new book. Though no doubt, if this is done, it will show the Government's respect for India's feelings, yet we do not think that it is either necessary or desirable. Government has lately forbidden the entrance of R. J. Minney's *Shiva, or the Future of India* into India. We do not know if it is in consideration of India's feelings. In any case, it is our opinion that we

should fully know what others think of us. 'To know is to be warned. We are not so hypocritical as to think that we are perfect. We Hindus have been politically subject for the last one thousand years, and it is well-known that political subjection crushes all manly and noble qualities. It is a miracle that we are yet so great and so noble. For, we say emphatically that in point of greatness and nobility we can stand comparison with the greatest nations on earth. We are undoubtedly the most moral and most spiritual nation in the world. But a thousand year's slavery cannot but leave its effect on us. In many things we are broken. We are poor and dispirited, and we suffer from all evils that poverty and despair engender. These evils were not so evident during the Muhammadan rule as they are now. For, in a sense, the Muhammadan rule was not foreign rule to the Hindus. But since then things have changed considerably. Our social and economic systems have broken down. That is why our outside looks so gloomy and lifeless. We lack health and activity. We are insanitary. Our people cannot work with proper energy. We are slow to eradicate evils and adjust ourselves to changed circumstances. All thinking minds will agree that these are adventitious faults and not innate in the Hindu nature, and that Hindus have, on the other hand, shown remarkable power and greatness of spirit and achievement. Yet, we admit that whatever the reasons, we have our faults, though they are neither greater than nor different from those of other nations. And we must remedy them. Our foreign critics help us in this. They accelerate our progress. At home the revival is quickened. There are already signs of this quickening as a result of Miss Mayo's insult. And India's enemies may thank themselves that they have overdone it.

And abroad? We have said how interest in India has grown. We Hindus have an urgent duty to perform in this

respect. The whole world, especially the West, requires to be flooded with India's ideas and ideals and the story of India's achievements. This is the opportunity. People are ready to listen. We must go out—the best of us—and speak with truth and understanding. We must publish books, well-written and authoritative. And we must show lives in which the ideals have become at least partially real. This is urgent. India requires all-round activity. Our struggle should be both at home and abroad. And of our foreign work, the spreading of the knowledge of India's ideals and attainments is surely the most urgent.

### A Sad Example

We request our readers to read in connection with our article this month the following extract from Prof. S. Radhakrishnan's latest book, *Kalki or the Future of Civilization*. In the passage quoted, the learned Professor dwells mainly on the conditions of family life as they prevail in the West to-day. We make no apology for the length of this quotation. The Professor is a thinker of international reputation. And he is not only deeply versed in Western and Indian philosophy, but has also great insight into the thoughts and events of the present day. It hardly needs to be added that his utterances are always sober and results of calm thinking.

"A number of factors, such as the disorganization brought about by the last war, economic conditions favouring late marriages, the passion for self-expression, weakened parental control, inadequate sex-education, Freudian psychology, and the knowledge of the methods of birth-control which saves us from the fear of natural consequences have brought about a laxity in standards. Women are rightly refusing to be bound by a code different from that which applies to men. The old ideals of a fundamental distinction between masculine and feminine natures or

male or female minds are given up. The ideal of virginity which the men persuaded the women to accept has largely lost its hold. Women as much as men, we are told, are wayward creatures full of roving passions who prefer romance to routine. They are insisting with great force and much success on being not our superiors or inferiors but our equals in constancy as well as in inconstancy. Sexual license is an old habit, as old as the human race, but we justify it by giving it a new name, self-expression. Looseness is commended in good fiction and accepted in high society. . . . Since social rules happen to be favourable to men and unfavourable to women, most of the latter do not want to be bound by them. However lax, partial, and therefore unjust, they may be, they are difficult and dangerous to assail. Economic independence with freedom from the ties of marriage and the responsibilities of motherhood is the ambition of many a young woman of the growing "smart set". Divorces are increasing in numbers and children are pushed back and forth between the parents whose only communications with each other are through their solicitors.

"Four different attitudes reveal themselves in this connection. The fundamentalists reassert conventional views and declare solemnly that if marriage without love is tragic, love without marriage is hell on earth. Unhallowed union even when redeemed by love is a crime, while any kind of marriage, even when it is utterly devoid of love, is a virtue.

"The social idealists tell us that a fixed code for a changing world is an impossibility. It is no use dwelling too long on the heights of idealism. If we descend to the plane of the practical, we shall see the contrast between high-sounding principles and laxity of action. Our conventional views do not give large numbers of women a satisfying sexlife. In a country like Great Britain, for example, we have two million more

women than men. The decreasing faith in religious life is reducing the chances of religious Orders absorbing the surplus of women. If, in these conditions, we insist on the ideal of monogamy, we are condemning large numbers of women to a life of celibacy. But compulsory celibacy is a contradiction. . . . While polygamy is illegal, its practice is real. By fostering vulgarity, deceit, and disease, practical polygamy degrades all concerned. Besides, it is senseless to make young people promise that they will cling to each other till death parts them. Love is safe only in the absence of a contract of perpetual obligation. "Trial marriages" seem to be the only solution of the problems of social unrest.

"The sceptics are sure that we cannot revert to the past, but the present makes their hearts sink. When they see how Divorce Courts are continually dissolving families into their units, setting them free to enter into new combinations, while children are drafted hither and thither into new homes where parental authority and wholesome example are lacking, they hold up their hands in despair. They do not know how they can help the situation, and so surrender themselves to the inevitable. They are drifting and not advancing, waiting for something to turn up.

"The bolder spirits declare that life is the end of life. The timid who are afraid to live are to be pitied, for they miss the excitement and the joy of life. They are content to shuffle through life without ever facing it with open eyes. The heroic "sin" with rare delight. Passion is its own excuse for being. Innocent joys of the body are not pollutions of the soul. There is nothing wrong in seeking physical understanding with those with whom we have intellectual affinities and spiritual kinship. Men may hold some things right and some things wrong, but nature holds all things fair. Adopting an attitude of naturalistic atheism, they

contend that the mechanical forces which have momentarily met together so as to form an agreeable human frame may some day separate themselves with the same indifference with which they came together, and while yet the chance is open, it is best to grasp it. If we want to live completely, beautifully, adventurously, we must taste deeply of the cup of life before death snatches it away. With the members of this class, it is no more a sign of good manners to veil one's appetites. There is no need for repression and concealment. Life is an adventure. Exercise of energy is the only good. Those who uphold conventional morality suffer from a low blood-count and are unable to understand why other normal people yield to stimuli to which their nature does not

respond. These advocates of rampant individualism are impatient of any curb on their own desires and resentful of any claim that will interfere with the free course of their life. They dismiss moral restraint as antiquated humbug and piety as mere superstition. Adultery is only the outward sign of inner freedom. Established institutions happen to be the most powerful enemies of life and so they must be turned down before we can build a better social order."

Readers will note that the mentality described as underlying the last three attitudes is essentially naturalistic and unmoral. We consider that the growth, or rather the imperfect growth, of science is mainly responsible for this mentality.

## REVIEW

RAMANUJA'S IDEA OF THE FINITE SELF. By P. N. Srinivasachari, M.A. Longmans, Green & Co. Ltd., 6, Old Court House Street, Calcutta. XII + 125 pp. Price Rs. 3.

The book under review puts in a clear and easy style the fundamental basis of Ramanuja's system of thought--the doctrine of prakāra. The author develops the meaning of prakāra as applied to the finite self from the logical, ethical and religious viewpoints. "Thought is impelled by the love of unity and tries to seize the totality of things. It employs the category of causality, substance and subject, and deduces therefrom the logical relation between Brahman and Chit." From the logical standpoint the finite self is inseparably related to the infinite, and derives its substantiality from it. The author finds in this doctrine of co-ordination the only logically adequate relation between the absolute and the finite self. It steers clear of the abstract absolutism of Samkara and the logical contradiction of the Bhedābhedavāda. Ramanuja in recognising the inseparable unity of matter, spirit and God is more synthetic in philosophic construction than any of the absolutists. The concrete absolutism of Ramanuja has, according to the author, all the value of a

synthetic philosophy without the defect of allied systems of thought either in the East or in the West. Ramanuja has not the venture of Bosanquet to synthesise the absolute of metaphysics with the God of religion. The same thought of essential unity and organic fellowship in the sphere of ethics and religion has been carried out. God is a constant associate to Jiva in love, and in a state of release from the touch of the body, the self realises the cosmic consciousness in its widest expansion and utmost commonalty. It acquires the Brahma-bhāva in which the intellect and the senses swoon away, and it is lost in the eternal enjoyment disdaining the glory of heaven. This spiritual expansion marks out the true meaning of the finite self as belonging to Brahman who is its very self (Page 92). The cosmic experience rises out of the consciousness of God as the prakārin or self of all.

This is identity of connotation between the finite and the infinite, though there is a difference between the finite and the infinite in respect of denotation.

We congratulate the author on his lucid explanation of theistic Vedānta in an easy and graceful style. There is no confusion anywhere about the author's meaning. Though we have no intention to undervalue

the exposition of Ramanuja's philosophy, still we cannot help thinking that his philosophy has lost sight of the absolute of metaphysics, and in this aspect it is defective. The author has quoted texts from the Sruti in favour of Ramanuja's theory, but he cannot be assuredly ignorant of the absolute monistic texts of the Upanishads. Professor S. Kuppuswami Sastriyar truly hinted in his introduction that the Visistadvaita School mainly evolved out of the upāśhanā texts of the Sruti, and unless the absolute monistic texts can be explained away, we cannot see how Ramanuja's theory can be regarded as the only correct and fitting explanation of the Upanishads.

Conformity to the texts apart, Ramanuja's system cannot explain the deep abyss of spiritual life as felt by the mystics, which is clearly hinted in the Sruti texts. Emancipated consciousness is not only a feeling of cosmic consciousness but a feeling of transcendent consciousness in which all distinctions dissolve away. This promise of mystic life cannot be found in God-consciousness.

The finite self can never be freed from finitude and the aspiration for cosmic consciousness may be eternal, but its attainment can never be so. This is a serious defect,—the finite background of personal life is sought to be retained in the cosmic consciousness in God-realisation. The author of the *Srutaprakāsika* points out that the finite self has the attribute of expansion and contraction native to it, but since its being remains atomic, the expansion, however embracing, cannot be a permanent state so long there is the opposite process of contraction. This defeats the ideal of love and devotion. This inherent defect has been sought to be removed by the intervention of Grace, but in this theory of Grace philosophy changes place with theology.

Then there is the standing difficulty of directly relating the world of nature to God. In the eagerness of synthesis Ramanuja has lost sight of the impossibility of direct relation between nature and God. These and other difficulties which it is not possible to exhaust in this short review, have led us to ask if the doctrine of prakāra has given the final satisfaction in the search after truth.

**A CENTURY OF SERVICE: A SURVEY OF THE SERVICES RENDERED BY THE BRAHMA SAMAJ IN FIRST HUNDRED**

**YEARS.** By *Upendranath Ball, M.A.* Published by the Centenary Committee of the Punjab Brahma Samaj, Lahore. 109 pp. Price 6 as.

The Brahma Samaj in the last century represented the advanced section of people in the country, at least in Bengal. It was the Samaj which stood as a bulwark against the tidal wave of Christianity which seemed for a time to threaten the Hindu Society. Till recently there was no movement conducive to the welfare of the country, with which the Brahma Samaj was not directly or indirectly connected. Some of the leaders lived exemplary lives, and because of their great regard for truth, courage of conviction and sincerity of purpose, they will ever inspire all who study them with high ideals. For all these the country cannot forget the services of the Brahma Samaj to it.

The present book is a laudable attempt to take account of the works of the Brahma Samaj during the last hundred years, now that its centenary is being celebrated. The book describes the religion and history of the Brahma Samaj and its services to the country in matters of religious and social reform, female emancipation, educational development, etc. In it we find many interesting facts: how the zenana education scheme was started as early as 1862, how a Missionary was sent to the Khasi Hills of Assam in 1889 to reclaim the hill tribes, and how the "Society for the Improvement of Backward Classes, Bengal and Assam," started under the auspices of the Brahma Samaj, has organised 406 schools with 16,389 children on the rolls, etc.

The Brahma movement was eminently a reform movement; but as it lacked the necessary sympathy and imagination for that, it could not touch the heart of the country and was limited to an isolated group. According to the author, Ram Mohun Roy "suggested that one community should approach another in a spirit of sympathy and fellowship, but at the same time an attempt should be made to find out the fundamentals, and not to worry about the non-essentials." As this has not been uniformly followed in practice there have been now and then occasions for strong feelings against the Samaj. In the opinion of the author "religion was freed from the shackles of age-long idolatry" (by the Brahma Samaj). But the fact should not be

ignored that during the latter half of the last century while idolatry was being vehemently denounced from Brahma pulpits and platforms in the city of Calcutta, five miles away there was an unlettered idolatrous priest in the service of a temple, whose realisations in spiritual life afterwards proved blessings to thousands of thirsty souls hankering after spirituality.

According to the author the two principles of the Samaj, viz. the Fatherhood of God, and the Brotherhood of Man supply a basis for the unification of the nation as no other religious organisation does. For the Arya Samaj "comes short of the regulating idea of the national movement," because of its "spirit of intolerance" and the Theosophical Society though it "came in as a uniting bond" is more an intellectual fraternity than a spiritual brotherhood. About the Ramakrishna Mission the writer says, "As an agency for social service it has made its influence felt all over the country. . . . But this movement also is not sufficiently comprehensive. The deep religious philosophy of Ramakrishna Paramahansa is not fully at work in the Society. External things receive greater attention than the soul of truth." This remark, we are afraid, proceeds from ignorance.

**SATYAGRAHA IN CHAMPARAN.** By *Babu Rajendra Prasad. S. Ganesan, Triplicane, Madras. 282 pp. Price Rs. 2-8.*

The oppressions of the indigo-planters in Bengal in the last century are still a by-word in villages. The system of carrying on indigo-plantation was a "system of bloodshed" and "Not a chest of indigo reached England without being stained with human blood." The tyranny continued in Bengal till Babu Harish Chandra Mukherjee and some Christian Missionaries took up the cause of the helpless tenants. In Bihar, however, the indigo-planters received no check in their acts of oppression and tyranny till as late as 1917 when Mahatma Gandhi stood in vindication of the rights of the people in Champaran. The present volume "gives the story of the liberation, by the use of Satyagraha of the ryots of Champaran from that hopeless economic thralldom to the planter, which had made the ryots worse than drum-driven cattle." As we peruse the book, we find ourselves in an oppressed atmosphere filled with the wails and groanings of a suffering people, and there is a great relief in the end because a tool was at last found to fight the tyranny and things were remedied. The book, though an English translation of a Hindi volume from the pen of the author, has got the freshness of an original writing and the reader is kept spell-bound throughout the reading.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### Temple of Sri Ramakrishna at the Belur Math

It is highly gratifying that the most pleasant function of laying the foundation stone of the Temple of Sri Ramakrishna in the grounds of the Belur Math at last came off in the beautiful morning of the 13th March last. Swami Vivekananda himself, the worthiest son of the Master, had in his lifetime conceived the idea of a large Temple to be established to his Master's memory at the Belur Math and even selected the spot on which this monument was to be erected. Shrines would be dedicated in it to all the prophets of the world. In front there would be a big hall where a thousand devotees, irrespective of caste and creed, would be able to assemble together and offer their prayers. In short the Swami

desired to make it the Temple of the Universal Spirit. It is a great pleasure that the grand conception of the great Swami is on its way to being realised. The erection of the proposed Temple, however, will entail enormous expenses. But may we not hope that we shall be able to see it completed in early future?

The auspicious day fixed for the happy function was the blessed birthday of the Master. Besides hundreds of devotees, many direct disciples, both monastic and lay, were present. The worship of the Master was performed with due ceremonies. In the presence of all, Swami Shivananda, President of the Ramakrishna Order, prayerfully laid the foundation stone with his blessed hands. A copper plate with English and Bengali inscriptions enclosed in a stone box was

placed in the foundation. A Sanskrit inscription also will be placed later on. We present to our readers a copy of the English inscription below. We are glad to record that on that blessed day seventeen members of the Order were initiated into *Sannyasa* and twenty-one into *Brahmacharya*. Does this final ceremony hold forth the ideal of renunciation and service that this Temple is destined to fulfil?

[THE INSCRIPTION]

IN MEMORY OF BHAGABAN SRIRE  
SREE RAMAKRISHNA DEVA,

And in the foundation of the sacred Temple to be raised in his honour in the Belur Math premises on the spot marked out by his noble disciple, Sree Swami Vivekananda,

This incised copper-plate  
Is well and truly laid,

By Swami Shivananda, President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, and a humble disciple of the lord in flesh,

In the presence of the Lord's monastic disciples in the flesh—and of others, monastic devotees and lay brethren, who have flocked under the Master's spiritual banner.

On this the 13th day of March, 1929, being the 94th birth-day anniversary of our Lord, Sree Sree Ramakrishna Deva—on whose name be peace!

Vedanta Society, New York

The sixty-sixth Birthday Anniversary of the Swami Vivekananda was celebrated by the New York Vedanta Society with due éclat on the 20th January last. The programme consisted of two services in the Society auditorium and banquet in the Ceylon India Inn.

The Society Chapel was gracefully decorated to suit the occasion and a big portrait of the Swami was placed in a prominent place amidst flowers and evergreen. A big tray of choicest apples was offered before the altar of Sri Ramakrishna and incense smell filled the whole place with an atmosphere of holiness.

At 11 A.M. Swami Bodhananda most feelingly related to the eager audience the story of his own experience with his master,

the great Swami Vivekananda. *Prasada* was distributed among the devotees after the service.

At 3 P.M. Swami Gnaneswarananda spoke on the life and message of the Swami and flowers were distributed amongst the audience as a token of *Ashtirvada* or blessings from the great Master, which everybody appreciated.

The banquet at the Ceylon India Inn marked the unique success of the occasion. Two big pictures of the Swami were tastefully decorated in the banquet hall and incense burnt. The hall was filled before the appointed hour and provision had to be made for an extra room to seat the overflowing guests. The India-America Friendship Dinner began at 7 P.M. and it consisted of a vegetable menu cooked in the Hindu fashion. The dinner began with the chanting of *Brahmārpanam* during which all the guests stood up in spontaneous reverence. An American artist admirer of the Swami made a respectful gift of a beautiful picture of the Swami to each guest, which everybody appreciated.

The programme of the banquet consisted of Hindu music, vocal and instrumental, by Swami Gnaneswarananda and Mrs. Kamala Mukherjee, recitations from the Swami's poems by Victor Junker, an American youth, and speeches by Swami Bodhananda who presided over the functions and by Swami Yogananda of the Yogoda Satsanga, Sriji Dhangopal Mukerjee, the famous author and lecturer, Sriji Basanta Kumar Roy, humanist, and Sriji Boshiswar Sen, an eminent scientist and also by two American friends of Swami Vivekananda—Mr. Hager and Mr. Goodyear who used to know him during his stay in New York. The speeches which were no less enjoyable than music were interspersed with many more songs and music. Although the function was declared closed at 11 o'clock at night, many of the guests were eager to hear more music and were not willing to go home. So musical recitals had to be continued till 1 o'clock in the morning. There was indeed an atmosphere of pure and serene joy and happiness during the entire programme and all were highly gratified.

# Prabuddha Bharata

JULY, 1929

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“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।”

“Arise! Awake! And stop not till the Goal is reached.”

## UNPUBLISHED LETTERS OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

### XII\*

(To a Madrassi Disciple)

541 Dearborn Ave.,  
Chicago,  
29th June, 1894.

. . . . On the whole the Americans are a million times nobler than the Hindus, and I can work more good here than in the country of the ingrate and the heartless. . . . The number of T—s in all America is only 625 by the last census. Mixing up with them will smash me in a minute than help me in any way. . . . The Madras people have done for me more than I deserved and more than was in their power. . . . America is the best field in the world to carry on any idea, so I do not think of leaving America soon. And why?—Here I have food and drink and clothes, and everybody so kind, and all this for a few good words!! Why should I give up such a noble noble nation to go to the land of brutes and the ingrates and the brainless boobies held in the eternal thralldom of superstition, merciless, pitiless wretches? . . .

### XIII

(To an American Disciple)

Almora,  
3rd June, 1897.

You need not be so much afraid about me. My body has been full of all sorts of complaints again and again and phoenix-like I have been reviving. It is the vigorous frame that helps recovery in my case, yet it is that too much

\* See “In this Number,” *Notes and Comments*.



vigour that brings on the disease. In everything I am extreme, even in my physical health, either I am like an iron bull or I am low down in the valley of death.

This disease brought about by hard work has nearly disappeared with rest. At Darjeeling it entirely disappeared. As you see I am now in Almora. I am all right now except for a bit of dyspepsia for which I am trying hard "Christian Science". I got myself round with mental treatment at Darjeeling. Taking lot of exercise, climbing up mountains, hard riding, eating and sleeping are about all my occupations now. I feel much stronger and better, the next time you see me I would be an athlete. . . .

How are you? What are you doing? How things are going on with you and Mrs. F? Are you getting your bank account fatted bit by bit? *You must do that.* Do it for me. If I am much worn out, I will strike work for good and come to America and you will have to give me food and shelter. Will you? I was born for the life of a scholar, retired, quiet, poring over my books, but the Mother dispensed otherwise. But the tendency is there.

#### XIV

(To an English Friend)

Almora,  
4th July, 1897.

Although I am still in the Himalayas, and shall be here for at least a month more, I started the work in Calcutta before I came, and they write progress every week.

Just now I am very busy with the famine, and except for training a number of young men for future work, have not been able to put more energy into the teaching work. The 'feeding work' is absorbing all my energy and means. Although we can work only on a very small scale as yet, the effect is marvellous. For the first time since the days of Buddha, Brahmin boys are found nursing by the bedside of cholera-stricken pariahs.

In India, lectures and teaching cannot do any good. What we want is Dynamic Religion. And that, "God willing," as the Muhammadans say, I am determined to show.

### LEARN AND CONQUER !

BY SISTER NIVEDITA

We are a nation of students. The whole East is full of students. No figure in the streets of an Asiatic city, whether the country be India, Persia, or China,—is so representative as that of the student. No power is so pervasive as the schoolmaster's might make itself, if maintained in harmony with the general aspiration. Why this pro-

minence of the learner? What is the explanation? Does it point to a national immaturity? If so, let us face the fact. There is no advantage to be gained, by shutting our eyes to the position of affairs; on the contrary clear thought is itself the starting point of a good fight with crudity and ignorance.

We must remember that the very words are foreign, in which this question is being discussed. We are, in fact, measuring ourselves and the maturity of our culture against a modern and Western standard. So measured, we are decidedly immature. There are many practical situations in life, where, beside the ease and mastery of the European, we feel ourselves mere children. Is this immaturity, then, an absolute, or only a relative truth? Is it perhaps true that all the people of the world are more or less immature? We cannot get the whole material advantage, out of a given situation as easily as the European can. But no one who has ever engaged in serious conversation with Europeans can doubt that there are many subjects on which they are, beside us, extremely childish. In the field of religious and philosophical speculation, they find it difficult to generalise, and propositions that are obvious to us will puzzle them severely. The same is true of the psychology of social relations. In the culture of the family, Europeans are curiously lacking. That whole idea of play, that shines through all our domestic intercourse, and lubricates all the friction of intimacy, appears to be unborn amongst them. Here they are as immature as we are in their field. Those strong faces, with their closed lips and air of instinctive mastery, notify us of nothing genial and easy, in the nature behind. Similarly, in us, the grave refined type of old men indicates no large public experience. All the lineaments have been carved, in the one case, by contacts with the larger world, the world of struggle and complexities, of clashing interests, and grim affairs; and in the other, by quiet experience of love and suffering, by the thought of God, and by the garnered wisdom of the home. Either European or Hindu, on his own ground, will appear unassailable; judged by the opposite standard, seem

unripe, crude, but half cultured and childish in his powers.

Unfortunately for us, however, the world is being remade, at this moment, by European culture. Its assimilation is the means and the test of success. With regard to it we are mere students. Then we are all students. It may be that when our lesson is learnt, there will be a compensating one for Europe to learn. That is not our business. Our business is to learn our own. Is it the foreign idea that we have to accept? Not exactly. The foreign idea, as it stands, would merely give us moral indigestion. We should not become a nation of moral dyspeptics. But we have to find, in our own stock of ideas, that one which enables us to meet the foreign nation on its own terms. The Englishman loves England, with a wonderful and often beautiful love. What we have to learn from this, is not to share his love for England. That would be the discipleship of monkeys, mere imitation. We have to learn to meet his love for England with an equal, deeper, more tender and far more intelligent love for India. As he professes to make his country and his people the centre of every activity, every thought, so we have really to make our people and our country the centre of our own. He has unity of national intention. We must realise our own national intention, and find an equal unity in it. *Swadharma*—"Better for a man is his own duty, however badly done, than the duty of another, though that be easy."

All power is in the human mind. We can master anything simply by giving our attention to it. Even the ideals of the West, the ideals of the new age, are within our grasp, if we study them, if we recognise their necessity, and proceed to work them out. It is natural, however, that under the circumstances, feeling as we do, that the study of our own circumstances, and of the new ideals that are

to initiate a new age, is the one duty that devolves upon us, it is natural that education should seem to us the supreme ground of battle for our national rights. . . .

Education is our one overwhelming want, in this hour of the nation's history. Knowledge we must have. And knowledge we are determined to have. An immense force has been called into being, by the organisation of schools and colleges. But once evoked, such forces must be fed and developed along sound lines. It is at their peril that mortals attempt to stand in the path of avalanche or the cannon-

ball. Is it imagined that mind-energy is less dangerous than material? Only the bravest or the grossest will attempt to thwart or baffle an awakened communal consciousness. The bravest, because he may offer himself as a sacrifice. The grossest, because he does not believe that mind is a force, like any other, and rules the world; does not believe that a poor weapon in the hands of Napoleon Bonaparte is more deadly than the best, when used by a coward or a fool; cannot understand, till it has turned and rent him, the perils of the great force called into being, and then subjected to the crushing weight of suppression.

## A DIAGNOSIS

By THE EDITOR

### I

We were glad to see some time ago the editor of *the Indian Social Reformer*, Bombay, admitting that "there is no doubt that a dead-set is being made against Hinduism." He wrote:

"Since the beginning of the present century, a new school of missionaries has given up the method of frontal attack on Hinduism as defeating its own purpose. Instead, it professed to see a great deal of spiritual aspiration in Hinduism which, however, could be realised only through Christianity. This school had a certain vogue for a time owing to its appearance of impartiality, but it has now spent itself. We seem now to have come back to the first place of the attack on Hinduism. Miss Katherine Mayo resuscitated Abbe Dubois who had long passed into oblivion. She has been followed by other writers who have denounced Hinduism as the parent of all evil. Miss Mayo herself has tried her hand again with the "Slaves of the Gods" but, owing to the changed feeling between the British and Americans rather than to any reason connected with the merits

of the book, the very same papers which hailed her "Mother India" with delirious praise, have condemned her second attempt as hysterical, over-wrought and fanatically prejudiced against the Hindus. Poor Miss Mayo! There is no doubt, however, that dead-set is being made against Hinduism. Part of it is political, the British in India and through them the British in Britain having persuaded themselves that Hindus as a class are the most clamant advocates of self-government. Non-Brahmin Caste Hindus and the Depressed Classes in South India are exempted from this indictment. Elsewhere, the whole Hindu community is regarded as being disaffected and this is ascribed to the opposition of Hindu orthodoxy to the emancipating consequences of British rule. Behind this feeling, however, there is a deeper feeling that Hinduism now remains the only effective opponent of the basic principle of present-day Western Civilisation. Buddhist countries like Japan and China, and Moslem countries like Turkey and Persia, have accepted Western Civilisation at least as

a matter of expediency. India alone refuses to do so, and the impelling force here is that of Hinduism. The triumph of the West will be complete when Hinduism lowers its flag and capitulates to the gospel of the so-called "standard of life." "

We are glad that this fact is being gradually recognised in India. We ourselves sounded a note of warning against this sinister aggression in our article, "The War of Ideals," in January, 1928. It is important that we become conscious of our danger so that we may not be taken unawares. This aggression is both conscious and unconscious. Every philosophy of life has a tendency to become aggressive. It impels its votaries to invade the domains of other philosophies. The modern secularism cannot behave otherwise. It is spreading all over the world. Spiritual views of life, such as that of India, are being assailed ruthlessly, and Katherine Mayo is not the only assailant. Of late America has become a convenient field for propaganda against Hinduism. For obvious political reasons, the value of American opinion is considered great. It is, therefore, to the interest of India's enemies that the mind of America should be prejudiced against India.

We reproduce elsewhere an article on India from *American Weekly*. The very title of the article indicates the spirit in which it is written. It is possible that our readers will wonder why we have reproduced it. The foregoing observations will partly explain the reason. We have in the past quoted articles from foreign papers in praise of India. But our duty is not merely to apprise our readers of the appreciations of India. We must also tell them how India is loathed and castigated in foreign lands. We must not expect only adulations. We must accustom ourselves also to the foulest abuse. We must awake from our lotus-eaters' dream to the sense of realities. We must know how we are being estimated by others interestedly or disinterestedly. The

sovereign remedy against such malicious propaganda as the reproduced article is an effective counter-propaganda by able and honourable cultural ambassadors from India. We have long shirked this duty. Swami Vivekananda repeatedly asked us to go to the different countries of the world and spread the unique message of India. India has scarcely heeded to his advice. It is not a superficial lying propaganda that India is to do in the foreign countries, or anything sensational. But a truthful, substantial preaching work, maybe slow but steady, backed by proper knowledge and ability and actuated by the best motives of love and service. It should be a work of necessary self-defence, but more of service. This India has not yet done adequately.

## II

We have a habit of simulating injured innocence whenever foreigners criticise us. We grow loudly indignant. But we do not do what is exactly required of us by the situation. Our purpose in this article is not merely to unmask the evil designs of our calumniators. In fact it is not our main purpose. We know we can point out as many notes and beams, if not more, in our critics' eyes as they seem to see in ours. The hollowness of Western pretensions to moral and cultural superiority has been proved again and again. If India is inferior in some respects, she is superior in others. We have shown in many of our articles the greatness of Indian culture. The present number of *Prabuddha Bharata* itself contains an article testifying to India's spiritual greatness by no less a person than Romain Rolland. But our duty does not end with setting forth India's glory only. We must also point out her drawbacks. It is idle to deny that we have many defects. No amount of argument can explain away the fact that we Hindus have been slaves for nearly 1000 years, that we are extremely poor and physically decrepit, that we lack

the fulness of life and mental vigour, and we are low, very low in many respects. How do we explain these? What is the cause of our present degradation? No, we are not perfect. There are undoubtedly many things in us, which have laid us low and kept us down. Merely singing our spiritual glories is not enough. It is true that if we dwell too much on our weaknesses, it will make us only weaker. But if we are already conscious of the soundness of our fundamentals, proper attention to the details will make us strong. We have all along sought to revive the faith of our countrymen in the spiritual ideals of India. We have tried to demonstrate the unique value and absolute necessity of our ideals. We have repeatedly shown how we are to reconstruct our life on the spiritual basis. We hope our readers are sufficiently well-established in the ideal. Now it is time they pay attention to the realities also and face them like strong bold persons. That is why we have specially reprinted the article from *American Weekly*, and produced a terrible letter of Swami Vivekananda, the first of the present month's instalment. Let us face the indictments and see if there is any truth in them. There is no shame or humiliation in that. We can boldly challenge the world to point out another culture or civilisation which is as noble as the Indian. But still we have our faults. And it is our plain duty to examine them carefully, and find their causes and remedy.

Foreign criticism, even the most unsympathetic and ungenerous, has some value for us, especially in the present age when there is a greater and greater commingling of the races and cultures of the world. There may be many national habits and forms which will perhaps ill agree with the world-federation towards which all are slowly but surely proceeding. These will have to be pruned off. National forms and ideals will have to be remodelled and reinterpreted after the pattern of world-

unity. Every race and nation must prepare itself for this sacrifice, India not excepted. But even apart from the demands of world-unity, India requires to be changed a great deal in the details of her life. Who can deny, for example, that there is appalling ignorance and superstition behind the kidnapping scare that is raised from time to time in India resulting sometimes even in riot and bloodshed? There are many primitive forms of worship prevalent in India now, which ill suit the modern age. The position of women in India has undoubtedly to be greatly improved. There are many odd practices among the laity and the religious, which scarcely add to the dignity of India. We are lazy, we are dispirited. We often talk non-sense in the name of religion. We have much of which we ought to be ashamed.

Our reformers have repeatedly told us where our defects lie. They have emphasised the reform of our education. They have asked for more and more of vocational and industrial education and sought to make education conform to our national genius. They have wanted us to become physically healthy and strong and mentally efficient. They have urged the emancipation of women and their proper education. They have sought to abolish the caste system and introduce intercaste, interracial and interprovincial marriage. They have striven to reform the existing religions and free them of what they thought to be their debasing features. Yet progress has been slow and inadequate. There seems to be an incurable lethargy in the mass mind which is scarcely responsive to stimulations from outside. The outside world does not seem to affect it. It seems impervious to all instructions. Our reformers have failed. And why? Because, as we think, they have not gone deep enough in their diagnosis of India's malady. All these defects that we note on the surface are really the expressions of and due to something more fundamental. The remedy

must be applied deep down there. What is wanted is a new quickening of life like the warm flowery spring after the bleak winter. At a single touch of the magic wand of the spring, the dead world wakes into a vigorous new life. Can we release such a spring season in the heart of India? This new power is the only remedy. Mending the surface is only secondary. Let us search for the source of the life of India and see what has clogged the flow of its waters.

### III

Let us consider our social conditions. One peculiar characteristic that we note is our passive attitude towards society. Why is there such a tremendous cultural difference between the higher and the lower classes in Hindu society? The apparent explanation is that the lower classes—forming by the way the vast majority—have not been given proper education and opportunities. This is a charge which Hinduism will perhaps try to answer by saying that in other countries also the masses have not fared better. But does Hinduism consider itself on the same plane of cultural development as other countries? Did not Hinduism possess long ago what is now considered the modern outlook? We say that our philosophy is the fulfilment of modern knowledge and aspirations. If that is so, how is it that we did not act in the modern democratic way towards the masses in the past ages? Why did we not spread education among them sufficiently to bring them to the level of the higher classes? India cannot answer this charge.

The methods of Hindu social development are somewhat peculiar. The different castes and sub-castes are mostly autonomous provinces of Hindu society. They live and grow according to their own laws. Very little is superimposed on them from the outside. They often retain their old customs, traditions and modes of worship. What do races gain

by entering the fold of Hinduism and becoming its caste? The very first gain is the example of higher life and culture in the higher, especially the Brahmin, castes. Each caste is imbued with the idea of approximating to the *Brāhmaṇa* ideal. This is a great gain. The *Brahmana* ideal generally influences their life's ideal, their daily life, domestic and social relations, their religious ideas. But this influence is mostly indirect. The second gain is that they get access to the higher philosophy and religion. It is true they do not generally have the opportunity of studying Hindu scriptures in the original. But the truths contained in them become their property through the vernacular literatures and oral preaching in various forms. They take to new forms of worship and often reinterpret their old forms in the terms of the higher philosophy. This way their social views and habits also undergo change. Thirdly, in some special times when there are spiritual upheavals, many of the lower castes are elevated at once to higher social positions through their allegiance to the dominant religious schools. Fourthly, constant communication with the higher castes cannot but have a beneficial effect on the lower castes. The Hindu method of social development, it should be noted, is specially careful not to injure the integrity of any caste. The influence is always indirect; the change is expected to be from within. It is essentially constructive,—scarcely destructive. Another feature is that this influence is expected to produce rather an inner change than superficial polish. In this respect, the methods of the Christian missionaries may be well contrasted with the Hindu methods. A Christian convert from a low caste very soon acquires an outside refinement: he dresses well; his body is cleaner; he learns reading and writing; and he is more smart. But there it often ends. Is he more moral? Is his social integrity superior? No. It is a fact that culture takes a long time

to soak in. It is well-known that the modernisation of aboriginal classes has often led to their demoralization. Hinduism, therefore, has always sought above all to develop a higher moral and religious consciousness in the lower classes. And it cannot be denied that no other nation has behaved with undeveloped races better than the Hindus. But we are not here comparing Hindu achievements with those of others. We are trying to find out why Hinduism has not done better, why Hinduism has not so exerted itself as to make India perfect in every respect, leaving no loop-holes for the foreign critics to point their finger of scorn at us?

No doubt Hinduism has done wonderfully. But its services to the lower classes have been indirect and meagre. Could not the higher classes do more for the lower classes without affecting their racial integrity and unbalancing their mind by too rapid reforms? They had centuries and centuries to do this. They did not. Why? *Because Hinduism, especially Paurāṇika Hinduism, has a tendency to emphasise passivity and subjectivity to an inordinate degree.* The responsibility is with the Hindus' present philosophy of life. 'This philosophy does not much encourage direct and objective effort.

Why have the Hindus been politically subject for the last thousand years? It is often said that Indian unity is as old as the Vedas. But why did not this unity operate when enemies were at the gate? We have more often than not succumbed to foreign invaders. We have not shown sufficient political acumen in our treatment with the foreigners. A comparison of the Mughal India with contemporary Europe is very instructive politically. We have not developed sufficient political sense. We have comparatively lacked manly and fighting qualities. It is not that we were less bold and strong than our adversaries. But we did not apply our courage and strength in an objectively fruitful way. Here also our passive philosophy was at

the root. During the Pathan rule, Bengal witnessed a mighty spiritual upheaval in the religion of Chaitanya. But it did not energise the people to throw off Muhammadan rule. Moslem rule continued uninterrupted. The religious people of those days were not sham. They were really spiritual. A great spiritual enthusiasm filled the people of Bengal and Orissa mainly through the ministry of Chaitanya and his followers. They sought and found the fulfilment of their life in a sphere where political subjection did not trouble. This passive attitude towards the common realities of life made it possible for the Muhammadans and then the English to dominate the land and its material powers and resources. We cannot exculpate religion, at least not in India, by saying that religion is concerned with the supramundane alone and not with worldly prosperity. For in India religion has been made the very basis of motif of the entire collective life. If it fails to achieve social, economical or political well-being, it can be legitimately charged with failure of duty.

Why again are we economically so degraded now? It is true that in the olden days people were prosperous. But did not the sea-borne trade pass almost wholly out of the hands of the Hindus? We as it were shut ourselves within our shells and sweetened our life more with the mental quality of non-attachment and contentment than with the acquisition of material wealth. When the old economic system broke down under the aggressions of European commerce, did we feel the imminent catastrophe and take energetic measures? No. We simply slept on. We continued our old ways mechanically, till we are now almost at death's door. Our economic life was based on the doctrine of *Karma Yoga* which evaluated work not by its outward volume and effect, but by the motive with which it was done. Work thus lost its objective relationships and became essentially a personal concern.

This is what happened in practice in the hands of the multitudes. Enough if the work procured a moderate living: one need not care to increase its volume; let one try only to purify one's own mind through it. Work became more and more subjective in nature and became contracted outwardly. Economic collapse was inevitable.

And the condition of our women, so endowed with noble qualities, often rising almost to the heights of God,—have we made them great and happy? The freedom and equality with men which they enjoyed in the Vedic days, where are they now? We have stunted their growth. The *Pauranika* ideal of *Sati-dharma*, with its emphasis only on the spiritual aspect of the relations of men and women, by which women were asked to spiritualise all their domestic relations, though productive of wonderful results in many ways, has signally failed to make them efficient, and have circumscribed the scope of their activity and atrophied some aspects of their personality.

Thus to whatever side of our life we turn, we find at bottom a particular outlook on life, which is really responsible for our defects and degradation. This is the essential cause. The visible are the symptoms and expressions of the invisible spiritual outlook. Our strength, the tendency to spiritualise, is itself the cause of our degradation also, because we have not properly and fully understood and applied it.

#### IV

The aim of a Hindu is to realise a state where there is no world with its multifarious interests, but only Divinity. This goal is not determined arbitrarily. Higher experience as well as metaphysical enquiry have revealed that the only true reality is God and that the reality of even the world is God. So long as we deny this truth in our life and action, we are deluded and unfulfilled and we suffer innumerable agonies and the pains of births and deaths. So the

Hindu wants to break the dream, to destroy the delusion and abide in the ineffable vision of God. This fact is the very basis of the Hindu's life and activity. But until this vision is gained, what are we to do? Shall we surrender ourselves to the charms of the world, the temptations of the mind and the flesh? No. We must spiritualise all our thoughts and emotions, motives and desires and experiences. There is God already in the heart of everything. The various objects of perception, with which our life, our desires, hopes, aspirations and actions are bound up now, are nothing but God. If that is so, why not think everything as God and feel and hope as for God? This is spiritualisation. When the process is complete, only God remains. Of course to facilitate this process of spiritualisation, there are various methods prescribed, called *Yoga*. We practise them and eventually realise ourselves and the world as Divine, eternal, ever blissful and immortal.

It will be seen that the process of spiritualisation and the methods of *Yoga* require above all a change of heart, a change of the angle of vision: we do not change the outside so much as the inside. It is the mind that has created the manifold vision of the universe and it is the mind again, that can destroy it. So we insist above all on the discipline of the mind. We say that the world of objects does not matter much. If I can control my mind, I can realise heaven even in the depths of hell. The better use of energy is to control and mould the mind, and not to dominate the external world. The world is like the dog's curly tail, you can never straighten it however hard you try. That does not mean that we are to forego all outward activity and cease to do anything in the world. The mind of most of us is such that it cannot catch even a glimpse of the Eternal behind the phenomena. It is so full of desires that it cannot rest content without action. So most men and women will and do act. But what



we should note in this connection is that the greater emphasis of the Hindu mind is on the curtailment of external preoccupations either in thought and action, and on the disciplining of the mind.

Who can deny that the Hindu has chosen the better path? No man or nation ever became really great except through mental discipline and allegiance to a spiritual idea. Our spiritual life is infinitely greater than our mental or physical self. To realise the spiritual self is to truly realise oneself. So the Hindus have chosen better. And if the Hindus so control and model their collective life as to facilitate this realisation, who can legitimately blame them? But there is one consideration. We must not forget that in making this superior choice, we have also risked a great deal. If we fail to spiritualise ourselves at least to some extent, we are neither here nor there, we become barren, ineffective, half-dead. One cannot deny that by concentrating on the spiritual, we do neglect the material. It is false to think that gain in spirituality automatically leads to material prosperity also. It does not, unless we make proper efforts for material gains. Our spiritual quest makes us neglect the objective aspect of life to a considerable degree. If we succeed in rising to spiritual heights, our material loss is more than compensated for. We realise the higher glory,—the loss of earthly glory does not affect us. But when the higher glory is not attained and the lower achievements are also neglected, where do we stand? Extreme degradation, both internal and external, is then our lot. The history of India testifies to this. We become extremely weak and contemptible. Squalor and stagnation become manifest in every sphere of our life. We lose all power of resistance. Spiritualisation is a great thing. It is like climbing a steep mountain. If we can reach the heights, heavenly glories crown our head. But if we fall, we are maimed and broken.

Those who do not aspire so high, have not to suffer so much as ourselves. Their fall does not hurt them.

It will now be apparent why we consider our philosophy of life itself as primarily responsible for our present degradation. *We are too subjective.* There is a subjectivity which is another name for higher objectivity. Then the subject realises itself not as the individual body and mind, but as the Self which pervades the entire universe and is the being of all beings. When that consciousness is attained, man feels the joys and sorrows of others as his own, and his heart-beats are attuned to the life-throbs of the entire universe. His life becomes an act of unending love and service to the world. There does not exist even the least tinge of selfishness in him. This grand subjectivity is the goal. But till this is attained, there is a subjectivity which is puny and selfish. It is shut up within its own concerns and interests. It is despicable. We regret to say that this kind of subjectivity is much in evidence among the Hindus, when the spiritual impulse to rise to the level of the higher subjectivity is lacking in the nation. The predominance of this lower subjectivity makes individuals to become too self-centred and neglect collective responsibilities, leaving them to be manipulated by the forces of customs and conventions and drifted by circumstances. The objectivity of the common people of other nations is much more healthy than this. For there is no stagnation there, no selfishness and dullness of life. *The lower subjectivity is the main cause of our present degradation.* It is this which prevents us from uniting in the nation's cause and quickly renovate ourselves.

Take the case of the caste system. We are each too self-centred. We do not seek much to bring about objective changes. We say: "It is the inner life that matters. What if one is born Brahmin or Pariah? The outward life and occupation do not matter. If a

Pariah can purify his life, he is greater than a Brahmin." Quite true. But there it ends. How many can rise superior to his environments? There are now and then a few saints born among the lower classes, but the vast majority? They continue in the same condition from generation to generation. Their crude habits, traditions and beliefs have continued unchanged. We have not succeeded in removing their superstitions and giving them higher religious even in course of millenniums, whereas the West has within two centuries cleared all superstitions right away. We harp on our philosophy, but we are oblivious that this philosophy does not help the overwhelming majority of the people. If we had realised the higher subjectivity, our unity with the lower castes would have made us feel for them, as it did our saints. But lacking that consciousness, we have neglected them for ages. Ordinary people have done little to remove the disabilities of the lower classes. We are shut up within our shells. We are not properly alive to the outer conditions. The more the pressure from the outside, the deeper we burrow our way into the interior of our selfish being. This lower subjectivity it is that has made our society a byword of contempt.

This is the reason again why we could never stand united against our enemies. We let them come and assail us. We could not, or rather did not, resist. Foreigners have often found us very easy victims. We have often proved ourselves fools in our dealings with our enemies. And why? Because we have always neglected the objective world more or less. We have lacked necessary knowledge. When foreigners came, we only raised more walls around us and cut ourselves off from them by newly invented customs and conventions. We saved ourselves by contraction and not by expansion. It is true we have often assimilated the foreigners afterwards. But in the meanwhile, we have been ground down to the dust.

All vitality has been sapped out of us. This process cannot succeed for long. The process of assimilation takes at least a century. But within that century the nation loses a great part of its vitality. If several such assimilations become necessary, the nation would be nowhere. And that is exactly what has happened. The strains of assimilation in the pre-Muhammadan era and the ravages of the savage hordes preceding it, left India extremely exhausted, so that when the Muhammadans came, we fell easily before them and did not succeed in either fighting or assimilating them. And when the Westerners came, we proved still more ineffective. And now our condition is precarious. This game of allowing foreigners to come and grind us and then assimilating them, cannot be played infinitely. Slowly the nation is devitalised and there is complete prostration. Our subjective outlook has brought us to such a pass.

And what about our women? Is not their present helpless condition also exactly due to this? We say it is the mind, the spiritual vision, that matters. Necessarily we have not given proper attention to the objective development of our women. With the change of circumstances women's sphere became gradually circumscribed within the zenana. But we did not try to fight and alter the circumstances in order to widen their sphere. Why? Because we found that our main purpose was not hampered by this limitation. We said it is the mind that matters; and our women spiritualised their life consisting almost entirely of their domestic duties and relations. For their spiritual fulfilment, this was enough. And in this respect, wonderful results have been achieved. But by atrophying their intellectual being, efficiency and objective freedom, we have crippled our own life. They may sweeten the home life, but they cannot inspire the collective life. The revolutionary changes of the circumstances in the present age

have almost entirely cut our women off the current of life.

## V

This then is the supreme cause of Hindu apathy,—his lower subjective outlook. This is impeding the flow of vitality. Hindus must acquire the objective outlook also. They must come to grips with the realities and manage them as other nations do. They must reform their society, build up their economic life, organise industries, achieve political freedom, grow in knowledge and power and become healthy in the ordinary, natural way. Let us not expect miracles. Let us not befool ourselves with the thought that in some mysterious *Yogic* way all these will be accomplished without our labour. We shall have to grind our way on. Do we thereby mean that we are to give up the subjective outlook? *Never*. This is our very basis and foundation. And this is not arbitrarily chosen. All will have to acquire it if they want to comprehend the totality of existence and model life in order to realise the ultimate vision. This is the only way. The spiritual realities cannot be perceived unless the mind is withdrawn from the objective world and made to thread its way through the intricacies of the subjective life to that high level where the subject and the object commingle into one. But while retaining this outlook, we must guard ourselves against the dangers of the lower subjective outlook. We must combine the higher subjectivity with the natural objective vision for the majority of men. We must not forget that unless the bulk of our people are made as clever and efficient as the best of other nations, we shall be nowhere. Our dangers are not all over. Even if we survive the present crisis, the possibility of aggression from outside is not gone. We have

yet to reckon with the Russians and the Chinese. We must gain objective vitality, and utmost skill and efficiency in the ordinary affairs of life. We must get rid of our weakness as early as we can, and must guard ourselves against any more foreign aggressions. And that is not all. We must not also forget that the higher subjective life is not for all. If we want to impose it on all indiscriminately and do not provide for objective fulfilment for the majority, we shall only stultify them and eventually kill them, as we have almost done by now.

Is it possible to combine the subjective and the objective outlook? Yes, it is. We once had this harmony. The *Pauranika* age has for various reasons destroyed it and overstressed the subjective aspect. We have to regain this harmony. This harmony cannot be regained consciously or piecemeal. It has to be a spontaneous growth from within. For it is a mode of consciousness and not a discrete thought. A new vision must grow within the very soul of the nation. The primary impulse must indeed be a miracle. The ancient spiritual wisdom of India must make yet another revelation to us. It must be vouchsafed to us, it must be born within our soul. And unless it is born there, outside reform will avail little. There must be a spiritual regeneration embodying the desired harmony and not merely a contribution of thought. Who will bring about that regeneration? Who shall be the Exemplar? Space forbids us to answer these questions here. But whoever will study the life and teachings of Swami Vivekananda, shall easily find the answers. For when the Swami says "Renounce!" does he not also mean "Conquer!"? He has indeed made the subjective vision the supreme motive of the highest objective conquests and the most worshipful service.

## THE DIARY OF A DISCIPLE

16TH JUNE, 1918.

It was 8 p.m. at the Ramakrishna Math at Bhubaneswar. The Math building was not yet complete. A monk of the Ramakrishna Order and the Disciple were conversing with each other. The Disciple said :

"The Lord is playing nicely indeed ! He has shut us up in the cage of mind and body, and has kept the key of the door in His own hand. To Him it is all play, but to us it is sheer disaster and there is no escape. Once Hari Maharaj (Swami Turiyananda) told me that he said to Sri Ramakrishna : 'Sir, though the old lady\* wants to play, it is no concern of mine. Why should I play? I won't.' The Master was annoyed to hear this. He said : 'Never speak in this way. She will do whatever She wishes. You cannot move a single step without Her will. You have to join in Her play. But take refuge in Her and pray to Her that She may wind up Her game.' "

*Monk* : "I have heard a different version of the story. The 'old lady' does not like that any should sit quiet by her. She wishes that all should join in the play. She loves those who play best and sometimes, highly gratified, she takes hold of one or another of them and takes him out of the play. The expert player, again, is not afraid of play and is not eager to end it. Even when he finishes his part, he resumes it again and continues merrily on so that the play may not stop. . . . . Oh, what nice things Hari Maharaj used to say at Almora ! It has been our lot only to hear them but not to realise any of them."

*Disciple* : "Yes, it is in such solitary places, and during illness that men speak out the deepest things of

their heart. Please tell me a little about him."

*Monk* : "He was very young when he first visited the Master. On Sundays there used to be crowds of visitors to the Master. He, therefore, would go to him on week-days. Once when he had gone to the Master after a long absence, the Master said to him : 'Hallo, I am told that you are studying Vedanta at home. What does it contain if not the truth that Brahman alone is true and the world false?' Hari Maharaj told me that the Master's words impressed him deeply. Scales seemed to fall off from his eyes and he felt that that indeed was the theme of all Vedanta.

"Of his mode of life in those days, he said : 'Ever since I was about twelve years old, I used to wake up at midnight. I would sit on my bed and recite the entire Gita once, which would take about ninety minutes. I would then go to the Ganges for bath. It was my habit to cook my own food. And in every condition, whether sitting or walking, I would meditate on the truth that God alone was true and the world false. I would test myself to see how far I had realised the truth. One winter night, I was bathing in the Ganges and dwelling in my mind on the truth. It was quite dark and there was none in the ghat. A while after, I saw something like a bundle of straw floating up towards me. I soon perceived that it was not straw but a big crocodile, and at once ran up to the bank. My heart began to thum. But next moment I thought 'Is this my Vedanta?' and jumped again into the water. The heart continued to palpitate and I felt that though I had jumped into the water, it was not from

\* The reference is to a Bengali sport in which one becomes the "old lady" and sits in the centre and another tries to catch the remaining players who evade him and seek to touch the "old lady." Whoever so touches the "old lady," wins.

the consciousness that all was Brahman, but from sheer obstinacy.'

"The whole daily life of Hari Maharaj is almost mechanically adjusted; the different functions follow one after another with mechanical precision. He rises as usual when it is still night. He washes himself and then sits in meditation. He then takes a short stroll and afterwards reads. How studious he is! Even when he was so seriously ill, he could not forego his books. He becomes deeply absorbed in his study. He has to be reminded again and again before he gets up for his bath. While he rubs himself with oil, he recapitulates to his attendants what he has studied. He said once: 'Whatever Swamiji (Swami Vivekananda) read, he related to us at dinner or on other occasions. This helped not only him in remembering the subjects better, but also us in learning new things.' Hari Maharaj keeps his things in their right places. When he returns from his evening walk, he places his shoes in their exact places and correct positions. In this connection he once said: 'The Master one day said to me at Dakshineswar: "They had their picnic at *Panchavati*. Just go and see if they have left anything behind. If so, bring it here." I found an umbrella and a knife. I returned to the Master's room and was about to place the knife on a shelf when he said: "Where are you putting it? Not there, but under the small cot. This is its proper place. You must keep a thing in its right place. You are keeping it in a place of your choice. But suppose I want it in the dark at night. Shall I then search for it all over the room, or call for you to tell me where you have kept it?"'

"Hari Maharaj said: 'Do you think you serve me? It is no service. You act as you like and cause annoyance to him whom you serve. To serve truly, you must forget yourself entirely. While at Swamiji's request

I was going to America, I once asked Sister Nivedita about the manners and customs I should adopt there. She took a knife by the blade, advancing the handle towards me and said: "Swami, if you are to hand anything to any one, you are to do it this way, that's all." That is to say, one must take upon oneself all difficulties and dangers and give others the advantages. This is service. One day in America, I was preparing some Indian dishes for some devotees, when some of the lady-devotees came offering to help me. I said: "You have not come to help, but to trouble me." They understood.' Hari Maharaj is right. We cannot serve truly.

"If we ever said to Baburam Maharaj (Swami Premananda) that he loved us dearly, he would say: 'Have I really loved you? No. If I had, I could bind you for ever to me. Oh, how deeply the Master loved us! We do not bear even one-hundredth of that love towards you. When I would fall asleep while fanning him at night, he would take me inside his mosquito-net and make me sleep on his bed. When I would remonstrate with him saying that it would be sacrilegious for me to use his bed, he would say: "Outside mosquitos will bite you. I shall wake you up when necessary."'

"Our parents had not loved us so deeply as Baburam Maharaj did. Parents' love is tainted with selfishness."

*Disciple*: "I do not believe that parents cannot love so deeply. They also love very deeply. But it is true their love is mixed with selfishness."

*Monk*: "While I was living with Hari Maharaj at Kankhal, G. also was practising *tapasya* there. When the Burdwan district was suddenly flooded, and our Mission headquarters sent wires to every one to come to join in the relief work, G. went to Hari Maharaj and said: 'I am practising *tapasya* here. If I go, won't it be a loss?'

Hari Maharaj replied : 'What is the use of *tapasya*? Do you think you will get hold of God once for all through *tapasya*? Give up such thoughts. There is no such thing as acquiring God. You must plod on all your life. At last things may become favourable and you may enjoy a little of God's bliss.' These words of Hari Maharaj struck us dumb with surprise."

## RAMAKRISHNA : HIS CREDO\*

By ROMAIN ROLLAND

[*To my Eastern Readers :* I must beg my Indian readers to view with indulgence the mistakes which I have made. In spite of all the enthusiasm I have brought to my task, it is impossible for a man of the West to interpret men of Asia with their thousand years' experience of thought, for his interpretations will be for the most part erroneous. The only thing which I can certify is my sincerity which has led me in a pious attempt to enter into all forms of life.

At the same time I must confess that I have not abdicated an iota of my free judgment as a man of the West. I respect the faith of all and very often I love it. But I never subscribe to it. Ramakrishna is near to my heart, because I see in him a man, and not an "Incarnation" as he appears to his disciples. In accordance with the *Vedantists*, in order to admit that the Divine dwells within the soul, and that the soul dwells in everything—that *Ātman* is *Brakman*, I do not need to enclose God within the bounds of a privileged man : that is (although it knows it not) a form of nationalism of spirit, and I cannot accept it. I see "God" in all that exists. I see Him as completely in the least fragment as in the whole cosmos. There is no difference of essence. And power is universally infinite ; that which lies hidden in an atom could, if one only knew it, make a whole world leap forth. The only difference is that it is more or less concentrated in the heart of a conscience, in an ego, or in a unit of energy, an ion. The very greatest man is only a clearer reflection of the sun which gleams in each drop of dew.

That is why I can never make those sacred gulfs, so pleasing to the devout, between the heroes of the soul and the thousands of their obscure companions of the past and the present. And neither more nor less than I isolate Christ or Buddha, do I isolate Ramakrishna and Vivekananda from the great army of the Spirit on the march in their own time. I shall try in the course of this book to do justice to those genial personalities who during the last century have sprung up in reawakened India, reviving the ancient energies of their country, and bringing about a spring-time of thought within her borders. Each one did creative work and each one collected round him a band of faithful souls who formed themselves into a church and unconsciously looked upon that church as the temple of the one or of the greatest God.

Far from their divisions I refuse to see the dust of battle ; at this distance, the hedges between the fields melt into an immense expanse. I can only see the same river, a majestic "*chemin qui marche*" (road which marches), in the words of our Pascal. And it is because no man so fully as Ramakrishna not

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only conceived, but realised in himself the total unity of this river of God, open to all rivers and all streams, that I have given him my love ; and I have drawn from him a little of his sacred water to slake the great thirst of the world.

But I shall not stop leaning at the edge of the river. I shall continue my march with the stream right to the sea. Leaving behind at each winding of the river, where death has cried "halt!" to one of our leaders, the kneeling company of the faithful, I shall accompany the stream. And I shall render it homage from the source to the estuary. Holy is the source, holy is the course, holy is the estuary. And we shall receive with the river tributaries small and great, and the Ocean itself—the whole moving mass of the living God.—R.R.]

### I

I shall begin my story as it it were a fable. But the extraordinary thing about this ancient legend, apparently belonging to the realm of mythology, is that it is an account of men living yesterday, our neighbours in "the century" and that people alive to-day have seen them with their own eyes. I have received glowing witness at their hands. I have talked with certain among them who were the companions of this mystic being—of the Man-God—and I can vouch for their loyalty. These eyewitnesses are not the simple fishermen of the Gospel story ; some of them are great thinkers, learned in European thought and disciplined in its strict school. Nevertheless they speak as men of three thousand years ago.

The wise men of the twentieth century are no longer foolish enough to imagine that it is possible for scientific reason to live side by side with the visionary spirit of ancient times—(and in one brain)—as in the Greek age, when gods and goddesses shared the bed and the board of mortals, or the age of Galilee, when against the pale summer sky the heavenly winged messenger was seen bringing the Annunciation to a Virgin, who bowed meekly before the gift. And indeed the richness of this world, which they do not know how to enjoy, is a real miracle. The majority of European thinkers shut themselves up on their own particular floor of the house of

mankind ; and although this floor may be stored with libraries containing the history of the other floors inhabited in the past, the rest of the house seems to them to be uninhabited, and they never hear from the floors above or below them the footsteps of their neighbours. In the concert of the world the orchestra is made up of all the centuries past and present, and they play at the same time ; but each one has his eyes fixed upon his own stand and on the conductor's baton ; he hears nothing but his own instrument.

But we may listen to the whole splendid harmony of the present, wherein the past dreams and the future aspirations of all races and all ages are blended. For those who have ears to hear every second contains the song of humanity from the first born to the last to die, unfolding like jasmine round the chariot wheels of the ages. And there is no need to decipher papyrus in order to discover the road traversed by the thoughts of men. The thoughts of a thousand years are all around us. Nothing can deaden them. Listen ! but listen with your ears. Let books be silent ! They talk too much. . . .

If there is one place on the face of the earth where the dreams of living men have found a home from the very earliest days when man began to ponder the problems of existence, it is India. Her unique privilege, as Barth\* has shown with great clearness, has been that of a great elder brother, whose

\* A. Barth : *The Religions of India*, 1879.

spiritual development, an autonomous flower growing continuously throughout the long life of a people far exceeding the span of Methuselah, has never been interrupted. For more than thirty centuries the tree of Vision with all its thousand branches and their millions of twigs has sprung from that torrid land, the burning womb of the gods. It renews itself untiringly, showing no signs of decay ; all kinds of fruit ripen upon its boughs at the same time ; side by side are found all kinds of gods from the most savage to the highest—to the formless God, the Unnamable, the Boundless One . . . Always the same tree.

And the substance and the thought of its intertwined branches, through which runs the same sap, have been so closely knit together, that from root to topmost twig the whole tree is vibrant, like the mast of the great ship of the Earth, and sings one great symphony, composed of the thousand voices and the thousand faiths of mankind. Its polyphony, though discordant and confused at first to unaccustomed ears, discovers to the trained ear its secret hierarchy and great hidden plan. Again, those who have once heard it can no longer be satisfied with the rude and artificial order imposed amid desolation by Western reason and its faith or faiths, all equally tyrannical and mutually contradictory. What doth it profit a man to reign over a world for the most part enslaved, debased or destroyed? Better to reign over life, comprehended, revered and embraced as one great whole, in which he must know how to co-ordinate its opposing forces in an exact equilibrium.

This is the supreme knowledge we can learn from universal souls, and it is some beautiful examples of such souls that I wish to depict. The secret of their mystery and their serenity is that of the "lilies of the field, arrayed in glory, who toil not, neither do they spin." They weave the clothes for

those who go naked. They have spun the thread of Ariadne to guide us through the mazes of the labyrinth. We have only to hold the length of their thread in our hands to find the right path, the path, which rises from the vast morasses of the soul inhabited by primitive gods stuck fast in the mire, to the peaks crowned by the outspread wings of heaven—*Tirān aithēr\** the intangible Spirit.

## II

The age-long history of the spirit of India is the history of a numberless throng of souls, marching over to the conquest of ultimate Reality. All the great peoples of the world, wittingly or unwittingly, have the same fundamental aim ; they belong to the conquerors, who age after age go up to the assault of the Reality, of which they form a part. It lures them on, so that they strive, they climb, sometimes they fall out exhausted, then recovering breath, they mount undaunted until they have conquered or been vanquished. But each one does not see the same face of Reality. It is like a great fortified city, beleaguered on different sides by different armies who are not in alliance. Each army possesses its own tactics and engines of war with which to solve its own problems of attack and assault. Our Western races go up against the bastions, the outer defences. They wish to overcome the physical forces of Nature, so that with her laws in their own hands they may fashion weapons for the subjection of the inner city, until the whole fortress has capitulated.

India proceeds on a different plan. She goes straight to the very centre, to the unseen General Headquarters of the Commander-in-Chief ; for the Reality she seeks is transcendental. But let us beware lest we put Western "realism" in antithesis to Indian "idealism". Indians are essentially realists in that they are not easily contented with abstractions, and that they

\* Empedocles, "the titan Æther."



attain their ideal by the self-chosen methods of enjoyment and sensual possession. They must see, hear, taste and touch all ideas. Both in the richness of their sensuality and in the extraordinary power of imagination and visualised intuition they are far in advance of the West.\* How then can we reject their evidence in the name of Western reason? Reason in our eyes is an impersonal and objective path, open to all men. But is it really objective? To what degree is it true in particular instances? Has it no personal limitations? Further it must be emphasised that the "realisations" of the Hindu mind, which seem to us ultra-subjective, do not appear so in India, where they are the logical outcome of scientific methods tested throughout the centuries by strict experiment duly recorded. Each great religious visionary shows his disciples the way leading infallibly to the same visions. Surely both methods, the Eastern and the Western, lend themselves to an almost equal measure of scientific doubt and provisional trust? The truly scientific mind of to-day recognises that a common and general mistake, if it be sincere, is a relative truth. If the vision is false, the important thing is to discover wherein lies its falsity and then to allow its premises to lead us to the higher reality lying beyond it.

The common belief of India, whether clearly defined or vaguely felt, is that nothing exists save in and by means of the Universal Spirit, *Brahman*, the one and indivisible. The diverse images of all things within the universe had their birth in Him, and the reality of the universe is derived from the same Universal Spirit, whose conception it is. Individual spirits, we who form an integral and organic part of the Cosmic Spirit, have realised that the universe

is multiform and changing, and we attribute an independent reality to it so long as we have not attained to the knowledge of the one *Brahman*. We are bewildered by *Mâyâ*, Illusion, which, being outside creation and time, we take to be the permanent reality, whereas it is nothing but a ceaseless stream of passing images, springing from the invisible source of the one Reality.

Hence we must escape from this stream of Illusion rolling all around us, and as a trout ascends a river, leaping over all barriers and up the waterfalls, so we must go back to the source. Such is our cruel fate, but it leads to salvation. *Sâdhanâ* is the name given to this painful, though heroic and magnificent struggle. The *Sâdhakas* are those who wage the contest. Their small legion from age to age is recruited from among the fearless souls; for they have to submit to a system of application and rough discipline, which has been tested through the centuries. They may choose one of two paths or weapons, both alike requiring long and constant practice—the way of "Not this, not this!", which may be called the way of knowledge by radical negation or the weapon of *Jñâna*; or the way of "This, this!", which may be called the way of knowledge by progressive affirmation or the weapon of *Bhakti*. The first relies on intellectual knowledge and has consistently rejected anything lying outside its range, proceeding on its way with intense resolution and eyes fixed on the supreme goal. The second is the way of love, whereby the Love of the Well-Beloved (whose form changes as it becomes more pure) gradually leads to the renunciation of everything else. *Jñâna* is the way of the Absolute, the impersonal God. *Bhakti* is the way of the personal God: at least its pilgrims linger long

\*In making this statement I am far from suggesting that Indian thinkers have no capacity for intellectual concentration upon the Absolute. But even the "Formless" of the Advaita Vedanta comes to a certain extent within the embrace of their burning intuition. Even if the "Formless" is freed from all attributes and from vision, can it be assumed that it does not acquire a kind of mysterious touch? Has not its very revelation something of the character of a lightning contact?

upon it before they join the pilgrims of *Juḍna*.

### III

Said Ramakrishna :

"When I think of the Supreme Being as inactive, neither creating, nor preserving, nor destroying, I call Him *Brahman* or *Purusha*, the impersonal God. When I think of Him as active, creating, preserving, destroying, I call Him *Shakti*, or *Māyā*, or *Prakṛiti*, the personal God. But the distinction between them does not mean a difference. The personal and the impersonal are the same Being, such as milk and its whiteness, or the diamond and its lustre, the serpent and its ziz-zag motion. One cannot think of one without the other. The Divine Mother and *Brahman* are one."

This great thought was no new one. The spirit of India had been nourished upon it for centuries, during which it had been moulded, worked up and rolled out by *Vedāntic* philosophy. It had been the subject of endless discussion between the two great *Vedāntic* schools,—the school of Sankara, the pure *Advaita* school, and the school of Ramanuja, the school of *Vishistādvaita* or "modified" monism. The first, or absolute non-dualist, considers the universe as unreal, and the Absolute as the only reality ; the second, or relatively non-dualist, also recognises *Brahman* as the only reality, but gives to the world of appearances, to individual souls, the value of modifications or modes, which are not illusory, but radiant with the attributes of *Brahman*, such as Thought, Energy, the dissemination of living multiplicity.

These two schools tolerate each other ; but the extremists of the first look with scornful indulgence upon the second, as having made a transitory compromise, adapted to human weakness—a stick to lean upon during the tottering ascent. The crucial point has always been the definition of "phenomenal" Illusion, the essence of *Māyā*.

Was it to be considered relative or absolute? Sankara himself did not define *Māyā*. He said that Illusion existed, and that the aim of *Advaita* philosophy was to annihilate it. On the other hand, the object of "qualified" or modified *Advaitists*, such as Ramanuja, was somehow to make use of it in the evolution of the individual soul.

What was the exact position of Ramakrishna between the two schools? The warm plasticity of his nature inclined him to the conciliatory solution of Ramanuja, but the intensity of his faith made him subscribe to the most extreme conception of the Absolute. His genius discovered the most vivid expressions, and the most ingenious parables to affirm the impossibility, not only of explaining it, but even of approaching it through the understanding. He came to impart a contact almost physical with the "Being without attributes", with the Sun of whom Sankara said, when replying to the objection that the purely intellectual Absolute was an impossibility without the objects of the intelligence, "the sun shines even without objects to illumine." But there was a difference in the language used by Ramakrishna, who had too catholic a vision to be able to pass by these "objects to illumine", even when he denied their existence. He said of his Sun that it shone alike upon the evil and upon the good—that it was the light of a lamp whereby one man might read the Holy Writings, while another might use it to forge human writing—that it was the sugar mountain which the ants, when replete, imagined that they had carried away, whereas they had only nibbled a few crumbs—that it was the sea, at whose edge a salt doll leant to measure the depth ; but from the second that its foot touched the water, it began to melt, it was lost and vanished. "The Being without attributes" means something that we cannot grasp. It eludes us. But that does not mean that we do not exist. He illumines our efforts,

our ignorance, our wisdom, our good and evil deeds—we nibble at His shell—a point of fusion exists at which He takes us again into His great mouth and absorbs us—but before that point is reached, where is the salt doll? Where do the ants come from? And as for the reader under the lamp, saintly hermit or forger, where is his home, the object read and his eyesight?

Ramakrishna said that even the Divinely revealed Holy Scriptures have been all more or less polluted, because they have come through human mouths. But is even the pollution real? (For it presupposes the parity, *Brahman*). Where are the lips and the teeth that have tasted some portions of Divine food? . . . .

In fact Ramakrishna distinguishes two distinct planes and stages of vision: that under the sign of *Māyā*, which creates the reality of the “differentiated” universe, and the supervision of perfect contemplation (*Samādhi*), wherein one contact with the Infinite is enough to cause the illusion of all “differentiated” egos, our own and others, to disappear immediately.

But Ramakrishna expressly maintains that it is absurd to pretend that the world is unreal, so long as we form part of it, and, receive from it, through the preservation of our separate egos, the unquenchable conviction (perhaps hidden within our lanterns) of its reality even the saint who descends from *Samādhi* (ecstasy) onto the plane of everyday life, is obliged to return to the envelope of his “differentiated” ego, however attenuated and purified. He is flung back into the world of relativity. “So far as his ego is relatively real to him, this world will also be real, and the Absolute will be relatively unreal. He sees *Māyā* as the real; but when his ego has been purified, he sees the whole world of phenomena as the manifold manifestation of the Absolute for the senses.”

And *Māyā* appears in its real guise—at once true and false, knowledge and

ignorance, (*Vidyā* and *Avidyā*), that which leads to God, and that which does not lead to God. *Therefore she is.*

And his assertion has the personal value of a St. Thomas the Apostle, who has seen and touched, when he bears witness to these *Vijnānis*, these men of super-knowledge, who possessed the privilege of “realising” in this life the personal and impersonal God—for he was one of them himself.

They have seen God, both outwardly and inwardly. He has revealed Himself to them. The personal God has said to them, “I am the Absolute. I am the origin of ‘differentiation.’” In the essence of Divine Energy, radiating from the Absolute, they have seen the principle differentiating the supreme *Atman* and the universe, possessed alike by the absolute God and by *Māyā*. *Māyā*, *Shakti*, *Prakriti*, Nature, is not illusion. To purified eyes She is the manifestation of the supreme *Atman*, the august sower of living souls and of the universe. . . . .

Then Ramakrishna intoned the Canticle of the Divine Mother:

“Yes, my Divine Mother is none other than the Absolute. She is at the same time One and Multiple . . . . My Divine Mother says: ‘I am the Mother of the Universe, I am the *Brahman* of the *Vedānta*, I am the *Atman* of the *Upanishads*. . . . It is I, *Brahman*, who has made this Differentiation. . . . Good and bad works obey Me. There is without doubt the Law of *Karma*. But it is I who am the law-giver. It is I who make and unmake laws. I order all *Karma*, good and bad . . . . Come to Me! Either through Love (*Bhakti*), through Knowledge (*Jñāna*) or through Action (*Karma*) leading to God. I will lead you over this world, the Ocean of all work. . . . And I will give you the knowledge of the Absolute, as well, if you wish. . . . You cannot get away from or out of Me. Even those who have realised the Absolute in the

*Samādhi*, come back to Me through My will. . . .'

"My Divine Mother is the Primordial Divine Energy. She is everywhere. She is at the same time the interior and the exterior of phenomenal things. She has given birth to the world. And the world carries Her in its heart. She is the Spider ; and the world is the web She has spun. The Spider draws out the thread from Herself, and then twists it round Herself. My Mother is at the same time the container and the contained . . . . She is the shell. She is the almond."

The elements of this ardent Credo are printed deep in the ancient sources of India. Ramakrishna and his followers never claimed that their doctrines were new.\* The Master's genius was of another order: He roused the Gods dormant in thought from lethargy, and made them incarnate ; he woke the springs in "the sleeping wood,"† and warmed them with the fire of his magic personality. The Credo is his own in its accent and transport, in its rhythm and melody, in its song of passionate love.

Listen attentively to it, for it is a magnificent song, illimitable and yet harmonious, not confined within the space of any poetic measure, and yet falling by itself into an ordered beauty and delight ! Adoration of the Absolute is united without effort to the burning love of *Māyā*. Let us keep in our ears its cry of love until we measure its breadth later by listening to Vivekananda. That great fighter, when caught in the toils of *Māyā*, struggled to break them, and he and She were in

a state of constant war, a state completely alien to Ramakrishna. He was at war with nothing. Rather he loved his enemy as a lover. And nothing could resist his charm. His enemy came to love him. *Māyā* enfolded him in Her arms. Their lips met. Armide had found her Renaud.‡ The Circe, who bewitched the crowd of other suitors, became for him the Ariadne, who led Theseus by the hand through the mazes of the labyrinth. Illusion, the all-powerful, who hoods the eyes of the falcon, unhooded his, and threw him from her wrist into the free open spaces of the air. *Māyā* is the Mother,§ "who reveals Herself to Her children through the various forms of Her splendour and Divine Incarnations." She moulds the sheath of the ego with Her love and the fire of Her heart, until it becomes no more than "a thing which has length but no breadth," a line, a point, which melts finally under the magic fingers of this refiner into *Brahman*.

So praised be the fingers and the water ! Praised be the face and the veil ! Everything is God. God is in everything. He is in the shadow as well as in the light. Inspired by the English "Moralists" of the XVIIth century, Hugo said, "the sun is only the shadow of God." Ramakrishna would have said that the shadow is also His light.

But it is because in common with all true Indian thinkers, he believes nothing that he has not first "realised" in his entire being, that his thought has the breath of life. The "Conception" of the idea regains with him its plain and

\* On the contrary their tendency was to deny originality even when they were the creators. The great religious spirits of modern India, and, I believe, of all countries, have this in common—that their power lies in the assurance that *their* truth is a very ancient one, an eternal verity, the Verity. Dayananda, the inflexible founder of the Arya Samaj, was always indignant if new ideas were attributed to him.

† Allusion to the title of the well-known fairy tale, "The Sleeping Beauty." (The title in French is *La Belle en Rots Dormant*, which literally translated means The Beauty in the Sleeping Wood.—Translator's Note.)

‡ Allusion to the characters in Torquato Tasso's poem, *Jerusalem Unbound*.

§ Or the eldest sister. For elsewhere Ramakrishna said to Keshab Chandra Sen, "*Māyā* is the created of the Divine Mother, as forming part of Her plan of the universe." The Mother plays with the world. The world is Her toy. "She lets slip the flying kite of the soul, held by the cord of Illusion." (October, 1882).

carnal meaning. To believe is to grasp, to grasp is to take into oneself the ripening fruit.

When a Ramakrishna has once known the grasp of such truths, they do not remain within him as ideas. They quicken into life, into the seeds of life, and fertilised by his Credo, they flourish and come to fruition in an orchard of "realisations," no longer

abstract and isolated, but clearly defined, with a practical bearing on daily life, for they nourish the hunger of men. The Divine flesh, the substance of the universe, once tasted, is to be found again, the same, at all tables and all religions. In it he partakes of the food of immortality in a Lord's Supper, not of twelve apostles, but of all starving souls—of the universe itself.

## INDIA'S CULTURAL SWARAJ

BY PRAMATHA NATI BOSE, B. SC. (LONDON).

### I

From what has been said in the last article, it will be seen, that the cultural bond of Indian nationhood was much stronger than the political. And when Westerners and Westernised Indians talk of calling forth Indian nationhood they have this fact in view, because they attach inordinate importance to politics and consider the political to be the main, if not the sole, bond of nationhood. The Swaraj which India enjoyed was primarily cultural. As we shall see hereafter, with real village self-government, the people were more or less independent of the central government. Ever since India attained the ethical, the highest, stage of civilization,<sup>1</sup> her empire extended nearly all over Asia, but it was the empire of culture with peace and altruism as its basic principles, won and maintained not by physical but by psychic force. The cultural contrast between India and the West was pointed out to Alexander the Great by the ascetic Dandin :

"We honour God, love man, neglect gold and condemn death ; you, on the other hand, fear death, honour gold, hate man, and condemn God. Your mind is filled with vast desires and insatiable avarice and a diabolical thirst

for Empire. You are made much like other men, and yet you would obtain by force whatever mankind possesses."

The Indo-Aryans have conferred enormous benefits upon large masses of people in India and outside India, in Tibet, Ceylon, Burma, China, Indo-China, Japan and Malay Archipelago and Central America, not by conquering or annexing their territories or exploiting them materially, but by settling among them and exerting the irresistible influence of intellectual and spiritual superiority. The system of Laotze, the greatest philosopher China has produced, corresponds so closely to Vedantism that he is supposed by some to have drawn his inspiration from India, unless, indeed, as some suppose, he was an Indian by birth. "Siam received," says Mr. Cobaton, "its first civilization from the Brahmins of India, and then from the merchants from the Malabar and the Coromondal coast . . . There are still extant noteworthy archæological witnesses of this primitive Hinduisation of Siam in the monuments of its former capitals. . . . The former and present religions of Siam (Brahmanism and Buddhism), its sacred language, its civil institutions, its writing, its arts and its literature came from India." "The oldest foreign loan words in Malay

<sup>1</sup> The writer, has dealt with the various stages of Civilization in his "Epochs of Civilization."

are Sanskrit, including words for religious, moral and intellectual ideas, with some astronomical, mathematical and botanical terms, a court vocabulary and a large number of everyday words. In their pantheon the greater gods are Hindu while the lesser gods are Malay. Their cosmology is also Hindu."<sup>2</sup>

The Mexican idea of the four ages or Yugas resembles that of the Buddhists, as does also that of the nine stages of heaven and hell. The Toltec tradition of the mysterious Quetzalcoatl, who is described as a fair man with "noble features, long black hair, and full beard, dressed in flowing robes" and as a "saintly ruler," probably refers to a Buddhist missionary. He is said to have dwelt twenty years among the Toltecs (one of the most ancient of the civilized races of Central America), and taught them to "follow his austere and ascetic life, to hate all violence and war, to sacrifice no men or beasts on the altars, but to give mild offerings of bread and flowers and perfumes." Such a mild doctrine could not in the earlier centuries of the Christian era have come from any other quarter than Eastern Asia. Legend tells stories of the mysterious visitor teaching the Toltecs "picture-writing and the calendar, and also the artistic work of the silversmith for which Cholula was long famed."

In the West, the Buddhist missionaries of Asoka carried the message of peace and universal amity to Syria, Egypt, Macedonia and Epirus; and there are erudite scholars who have traced the influence of Buddhism on the early development of Christianity.

The medical science of the West was strongly influenced by that of the Hindus. Numerous drugs of Indian origin are noticed by the Greeks. It is even supposed by some that Hippocrates borrowed from the Hindus. Charaka, the oldest Hindu writer on medical subjects whose works have come down to us, is referred to by Serapion, one of the

earliest of the Arab physicians, as well as by Avicenna and Rahzes. A variety of treatises on medical science were translated from the Sanskrit into Arabic and Persian, and two Hindu physicians, Mankeh and Saleh, the former of whom translated a special Sanskrit treatise on poison into Persian, held appointments as body physicians to Harun-ul-Rashid. The Saracens introduced the Indian method of arithmetic and the Indian algebra and chemistry into Europe.

From a very remote period, India has been divided into a number of small principalities. Megasthenes counted 118 and Hiouen T'sang 70. The Kings who were most powerful exacted submission from weaker princes, but such submission was in the majority of cases merely nominal. Even in the case of conquest, it is enjoined in the *Manu-samhita*, that "immediate security is to be assured to all by proclamation. The religion and laws of the country are to be respected and as soon as time has been allowed for ascertaining that the conquered people are to be trusted, a prince of the royal family of the conquered country is to be placed on the throne who should hold his kingdom as a dependency." That this law was not a mere camouflage is proved by the fact that the majority of the Kings of India have been either Hinduised aborigines or low caste Hindus. The Brahmans, the highest caste, never, as a class, sought material aggrandisement. Government, trade, in short every occupation calculated to further material interests, they left to the lower classes. What they sought to restrict within the two highest classes, and especially within their own class, was spiritual and intellectual advancement which is of much more abiding value to a nation and to humanity than material aggrandisement. And under their wise guidance India maintained cultural Swaraj which made her prosperous despite numerous political revolutions.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Kalidas Nag, "Greater India Society Bulletin No. 1."

## II

As the writer has shown in his "National Education and Modern Progress," the primary object of high education in India was ethical and spiritual culture. It was carried down to the mass of the people by vernacular translations of works like the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, popular dramatic entertainments, etc. That ethical culture in Ancient India was not confined to literature and inscriptions, but was to a large extent realised by the people in their lives, is testified to by intelligent foreigners (Greeks and Chinese) who sojourned in India long enough to be able to form a correct estimate of its condition.<sup>3</sup> Coming to more recent times, Idrisi in his Geography (written in the 11th century A.D.) says: "The Indians are naturally inclined to justice and never depart from it in their action. Their good faith, honesty and fidelity to their engagements are well-known, and they are so famous for these qualities that people flock to their country from every side." Marco Polo (13th century) observed: "You must know that these Brahmins are the best merchants in the world and the most truthful, they would not tell a lie for anything on earth." Abul Fazl, the accomplished author of the *Ain-i-Akbari* (16th century), notes: "The Hindus are admirers of truth and unbounded fidelity in all dealings."

During the earlier part of the British Rule, Col. Sleeman assures us that "falsehood or lying between members of the same village is almost unknown." He adds, "I have had before me hundreds of cases in which a man's property, liberty and life have depended upon his telling a lie, and he has refused to tell it."

Warren Hastings spoke of the modern Hindus as "gentle, benevolent, more susceptible of gratitude for kindness shown them than prompted to vengeance for wrongs inflicted, and as

exempt from the worst propensities of human passion as any people upon the face of the earth; they are faithful, and affectionate in service and submissive to legal authority. . . The precepts of their religion are wonderfully fitted to promote the best ends of society, its peace and good order."

Bishop Heber spoke of them as "decidedly by nature, a mild, pleasing, and intelligent race; sober, parsimonious and, when an object is held out to them, most industrious and persevering," and as "constitutionally kind-hearted, industrious, sober, and peaceable."

Abbe Du Bois speaking of the Hindus says, "They will never suffer the needy who have implored their charity to go unassisted. . . What the European possesses, he keeps for himself. What the Hindu possesses, he is always disposed to share with those who have nothing. In fact, it might be said that a wealthy Hindu considers himself as the depository or distributor, rather than the proprietor of his fortunes, so greatly prone is he to acts of charity and benevolence."

Any one who has mixed with our people, especially away from large cities, would, I think, agree with me when I say, that they are still to a large extent pervaded by the Hindu ideals of self-abnegation and benevolence, and that there is still much less of animality in them than in the corresponding classes in the West. The number of criminals, especially of female criminals, in proportion to the total population in India is much less than in the highly civilized countries of the West. I was touring in the Central Provinces during the great famine of 1898-99 and was greatly struck by the patient resignation with which they bore the dire calamity and the benevolent spirit in which they helped one another. There were no riots, no increase in crimes to speak of. There is more poverty here than in the West, and more ignorance judged by

<sup>3</sup> Vide "Epochs of Civilization," pp. 187-191.

the standard of literacy, but there is much less of squalor and brutality, much less of degradation and misery. Our community still produces men of the *sattvika* type, though their number is much smaller than before, and they still exert considerable influence upon the other classes. They rarely, if ever, appear in newspaper; what they do is done in silence and secrecy. While touring in the Rewah State in the nineties of the last century, I was surprised to find that the Gonds of an extensive tract in that state, who, like most other aboriginal tribes, are generally addicted to intoxicating drinks, had given up drinking; and on inquiry, I found out the reason to be the fiat of a *Yogi* who had visited the state some-time before me.

"His order had gone forth from village to village, and the Gonds without question had become total abstainers. No crusade against intemperance could have produced such a wonderful and wide-spread result. There are no doubt charlatans among the *Yogis* who live upon the credulity of ignorant people. But there cannot be the shadow of a doubt, that there are also genuine men among them, men who devote their lives to spiritual culture in a manner inconceivable to the European."

In regard to the honesty of our people, Sir John Hewet (now Lord Meston), when he was Lieutenant Governor of the United Provinces, said in an interview which he gave to a press representative:

"In another way the famine (1908, United Provinces) provided an encouraging experience by testifying to the sturdy honesty and self-reliance of the cultivating classes. The Government then advanced nearly a million and a half sterling to cultivators for temporary purposes, in addition to large loans for wells and other permanent additions to irrigation. Practically the whole of this large sum was repaid with the

exception of a sum of rather more than £50,000 which had to be remitted owing to the famine being followed by bad seasons in a few small tracts. In one district four thousand individuals took advances for a particular purpose connected with irrigation, and only two were found to have devoted their money to a purpose other than that for which it was intended. The manner in which the people recovered from the disaster that had fallen on them and the punctuality with which the agricultural body repaid their advances seem to me to be the most hopeful augury for the future. I venture to doubt indeed whether *such an experience would be possible in any country but India.*" (The italics are mine).

### III

In regard to intellectual culture, philosophy, the science of language, mathematics, the medical sciences, etc., were carried to a high pitch of development.<sup>4</sup> When Moslem rule was established over a large part of India, Sanskrit science and Sanskrit general literature suffered to a large extent owing to the disappearance of a good number of Hindu courts which patronised them. The last great name the former could boast of was that of Bhāscaracharya who wrote his masterpiece, *Siddhanta Siromani*, about the middle of the twelfth century. The last great names in the field of general Sanskrit literature were those of Magha, Sriharsha and Javadeva, all of whom flourished before the close of the twelfth century. The few courts of Hindu Kings, such as that of Vijaynagar in Southern India, which escaped the grasp of the Mahomedans, still fostered Sanskrit learning; it was also kept up at such places as Benares and Nadia. But during the five centuries and a half of Moslem supremacy Sanskrit literature can boast of only a few commentators, such as Sayanacharya of Vijay-

<sup>4</sup> Vide "Epochs of Civilization," pp. 135—157 and 193—202.



naga, and Raghunandan of Nadia, and Sanskrit science, of only one astronomer, Raja Jay Singh of Jaipur.

But the loss to Sanskrit literature was more than made up by the gain to the vernacular literatures. It was chiefly the influence of Mahomedanism with its doctrine of the brotherhood of man that produced that succession of earnest reformers who shed such lustre on India from the fourteenth century to the sixteenth. Ramananda, Kabir, Nanak, and Chaitanya were certainly influenced by the tenets of Mahomedanism. They all preached the unity of the Godhead; they all protested against caste. They had their disciples not only among the lowest classes of the Hindus, but also among Mahomedans.

The impetus, which the reformers gave, directly and indirectly, to the progress of the vernacular literatures, was very great. In Northern India the teachings of Kabir and Chaitanya were embodied by their followers in voluminous works, which enriched them. They preached to the people in the languages of the people. Their adoption of the vernaculars as their literary languages was a protest against the exclusiveness of the orthodox Brahmans. The books written in Sanskrit were not understood by the mass of the people: they were not meant for the people. Now the people had books written in their vernaculars, books which, if they

could not read themselves, they could at least understand if read to them. It was about the time of the Mahomedan conquest that the Indian vernaculars, the Hindi, the Bengali, the Uriya, and the Marathi, began to be developed. This development was not the direct work of the Mahomedan occupation. Long before that time, even centuries before the Christian era, the mass of the Hindus spoke in Aryan dialects, which were called Prakrits. Vararuchi, the earliest Prakrit grammarian, enumerates four classes of these in the sixth century A. D.—Mahārāstri, Sauraseni, Māgadhi, and Paisāchi. The vernaculars of India were gradually evolved from these dialects. They must have been in process of evolution long before the Mahomedan conquest. But that the first great impulse to vernacular literatures was given by the Vaishnava Reformation which was carried on from the thirteenth to the sixteenth century by Ramananda, Kabir, Chaitanya and a number of other reformers, is shown by the facts that with the exception of some Hindi ballads in Rajputana, vernacular literatures have scarcely anything to show before the thirteenth century,<sup>5</sup> and that the earliest writers were mostly Vaishnavas. In Northern India, besides the reformer Kabir, the two great Hindi writers previous to the eighteenth century were Sur Das, and Tulsi Das;<sup>6</sup> and they were both earnest Vaishnavas.

<sup>5</sup> The Tamil is excluded from this generalisation. Its development was earlier than that of the other vernaculars. The Tol-kappivam, the oldest extant Tamil work, is believed to have been written a few centuries before the birth of Christ. It is still the greatest authority on Tamil grammar. "Whatever antiquity," says Caldwell, "may be attributed to the Tol-kappivam, it must have been preceded by many centuries of literary culture. It lays down rules for different kinds of poetical compositions, which must have been deduced from examples furnished by the best authors whose works were then in existence. . . . In endeavouring to trace the commencement of Tamil literature we are thus carried further and further back to an unknown period." "Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian Languages," 1875, pp. 127-128. "With the exception of a few works composed towards the end of the twelfth century, nearly all the Telugu works that are now extant appear to have been written in the fourteenth and subsequent centuries, after the establishment of the kingdom of Vijaynagara; and many of them were written in comparatively recent times." (Caldwell, *op. cit.* p. 123). The most ancient and esteemed grammar of classical Canarese, that by Kesava, was written about 1170 A. D. The oldest extant work in Malayalam is "Ramacharita," which was written about the thirteenth century A. D.

<sup>6</sup> Sur Das flourished about the middle of the sixteenth century. "He and Tulsi Das," says Mr. Grierson, "are the two great stars in the firmament of Indian vernacular poetry. Tulsi was devoted to Ram (*ekanta Ram-sevak*) while Sur Das was devoted to Krishna (*ekanta Krishna-sevak*) and between them they are said to have exhausted all the possibilities of poetic art." (Journ. As. Soc. of Bengal pt. I for 1886, special number, p. 21.)

The earliest Bengali authors (fourteenth to the sixteenth century) were enthusiastic worshippers of Krishna, the most notable among them being Vidyapati and Chandidas. No Marathi writer of any note is known before the thirteenth century and the greatest poets of Maharashtra, Tukaram and Sridhar were Vaishnavas.<sup>7</sup>

There was a very wide-spread network of *Pathshalas* (primary schools) for elementary education. Being naturally evolved, it was well adapted to the social and economic condition of the people and to their requirements, and maintained by the community it encouraged self-help and self-reliance. Besides, being inexpensive, it was capable of very wide extension. Sir Thomas Munro had an investigation made into the state of indigenous education in the Madras Presidency. From the results of his inquiries it appears that, in that Presidency, about 1826, the number of schools amounted to 12,493, and the population to 12,850,041, so that there was one school to every thousand of the population, but as only a very few females are taught in schools, we may reckon one school to every 500 of the population.

#### IV

The fine arts were carried to a high stage of development as is evidenced by the Buddhist monasteries, chaityas, etc. of Bharhut and other places, the magnificent Hindu temples of Srirangam, Madura, Bhubanesvar, etc., and

the architectural marvels of Northern India like the Taj Mahal.

The Emperor Chandragupta had special departments of the state to superintend trade and mining and manufacturing industries. Travellers from Greece, Rome and China marvelled at the skill which the Indians displayed in them. Offerings were made to the gods in the costliest of plate; armour and arms richly decorated with gold and silver, and costly jewellery and dresses of the finest web adorned the persons of the higher classes; and gems, rich brocades, and muslins of the most delicate workmanship found their way from India to the markets of China, Persia, Egypt and Rome. There are references in the *Manusamhita* to vessels made not only of copper, iron, brass, pewter, tin and lead, but also of gold and silver. Household utensils made of leather, cane, horn, shells and ivory were not uncommon. From the frequent mention of gems and ornaments made of the precious metals as well as from the tax levied upon them, they seem to have been in no small demand. Perfumes, honey, iron, indigo, lac, medical substances, wax, sugar, spice, etc., formed some of the ordinary articles of trade. There are references not only to clothes made of cotton and jute but also to silk and woollen manufactures.

The Hindus made considerable advance in the chemical and metallurgical industries. Varahamihira, who flourished early in the sixth century

Tulsi Das flourished about the commencement of the seventeenth century. For his life see Grierson, *op. cit.* p. 12 *et seq.* and Growse's "Ramayana of Tulsi Das," Introduction. In Northern India, the Ramayana of Tulsi Das is "in everyone's hands, from the court to the college, and is read or heard and appreciated alike by every class of the Hindu community, whether high or low, rich or poor, young or old."

<sup>7</sup> Tukaram died in 1630. He was an ardent worshipper of Vithoba (Vishnu) "He is," says Mr. Acworth, "the most original of all Marathi poets, and his work is remarkable for a high and sustained level of religious exaltation." Sridhar died in 1728. He rendered the Ramayana and the Mahabharata into Marathi. "There is no Marathi poet who equals Sridhar in the acceptance he obtains from all classes. In every town and village in the Deccan and Konkan, especially during the rains, the pious Maratha will be found enjoying with the family and friends, the recitation of the Pothi of Sridhar and enjoying it indeed. Except an occasional gentle laugh, or a sigh, or a tear, not a sound disturbs the rapt silence of the audience, unless when one of those passages of supreme pathos is reached, which affects the whole of listeners simultaneously with an outburst of emotion which drowns the voice of the reader." "Ballads of the Marathas" by H. A. Acworth, Introduction.

A.D., mentions several preparations of cements "strong as the thunderbolt," and of dyes, cosmetics and scents. He also refers to mechanical experts. India had already made three important discoveries, which for a long time secured her a foremost place in the commercial world—(1) the preparation of fast dyes ; (2) the extraction of the principle of indigotin from the indigo plant, and (3) the tempering of steel by advanced metallurgical processes.<sup>8</sup>

Indian handicrafts did not suffer from the Mahomedan conquest. Not only did indigenous manufactures flourish under Mahomedan patronage, but many new industries were imported from beyond the confines of India, such as the carpet-weaving of Kurdistan and the glazed pottery of Ispahan. The material condition of the people under the Mogul Empire was, on the whole, one of ease and comfort.

Nicolo-di-Conti, who travelled about A.D. 1420, describes the banks of the Ganges as covered with cities and beautiful gardens. He ascended the Ganges till he came to what he calls a most famous and powerful city named Mairazia abounding in gold, silver and pearls. Baber, who came to India in the beginning of the sixteenth century, speaks of it as a rich and noble country, abounding in gold and silver and was astonished at the swarming population, and the innumerable workmen in every trade and profession. Sebastian Manrique, who travelled about 1612, mentions the magnificent cotton fabrics of Bengal exported to all the countries of the East. He describes Dacca, then the capital of Bengal, to be frequented by people of every nation and to contain

upwards of 200,000 souls. When that town came under British Government its population was also estimated at that figure. Manrique travelled from Lahore to Multan through a country abounding in wheat, rice, vegetables, and cotton. The villages, he tells us, are numerous and contain excellent inns. Tatta in Sind, where he stayed for a month, is described by him to be extremely rich. The country round was of exuberant abundance, particularly in wheat, rice, and cotton, in the manufacture of which at least two thousand looms were employed. Some silk was also produced, and also a beautiful species of leather, variegated with fringes and ornaments of silk. Mandeslo, a German, who travelled about 1638, found Broach to be a populous city, almost filled with weavers, who manufactured the finest cotton cloth in the province of Guzerat. On his way from Broach to Ahmedabad, he passed through Brodera, another large town of weavers and dyers. He was much struck with the splendour and beauty of Ahmedabad, the chief manufactures of which were those of silk and cotton. Cambay appeared to him a larger city than Surat, and carried on an extensive trade. He found Agra, then the capital of India, to be twice as large as Ispahan ; a man in one day could not ride round the walls. The streets were handsome and spacious ; some were vaulted above for the convenience of shopkeepers, who had their goods exposed there for sale.

Tavernier, who had repeatedly visited most parts of India, says that Shah Jehan reigned not so much as a King over his subjects, but rather as

<sup>8</sup> The remarkable iron pillar near the Kutab Minar at Delhi may be given as an example of the admirable skill of the Hindus. It measures about 24 feet in length, and its diameter is 16 inches at the base and 12 inches at the capital. Its probable date is about the fifth century. "It opens our eyes," says Dr. Fergusson, "to an unsuspected state of affairs to find the Hindus at that age forging a bar of iron larger than any that have been forged even in Europe to a very late date, and not frequently even now. As we find them, however, a few centuries afterwards using bars as long as this in roofing the arch of the temple at Karnak, we must believe, that they were much more familiar with the use of this metal than they afterwards became. It is almost equally startling to find that after an exposure to wind and rain for fourteen centuries, it is unruined, and the capital and inscription are as clear and as sharp now as when put up fourteen centuries ago."

a father over his family and children. He commends the strictness of his civil government and speaks highly of the security enjoyed under it.

Pietro della Valle, who wrote about 1623, says :

"Hence, generally, all live much after a genteel way ; and they do it securely as well, because the king does not persecute his subjects with false accusations, nor deprive them of anything when he sees them live splendidly."

Bernier, who resided for some time in India about the middle of the seventeenth century, writes deprecatingly of the wealth of the people. He admits, however, "that India is like an abyss, in which all the gold and silver of the world are swallowed up and lost ; such vast quantities are continually imported thither out of Europe, while none ever returns ;" and "that vast quantities of the precious metals are employed not only in earrings, noserings, bracelets of hands and feet, and other ornaments, but in embroidering and embellishing the clothes alike of the Omrahs and of the meanest soldiers."

When Clive entered Murshidabad he wrote of it : "This city is as extensive, populous and rich as the city of London, with this difference that there are individuals in the first possessing infinitely greater property than in the last city."

The transactions of the European trading companies gave great impetus to some of the industries of the seaboard provinces of India. The great silk industry of Bengal, which until a few years ago was in a highly flourishing condition, owed its expansion to the export trade created by the East India Company. The prosperity of the weaving industry of Dacca about the close of the eighteenth century may be best estimated from the fact that, in 1787, fifty lacs of rupees worth of cloths were entered at the Custom

House of that town for export to foreign countries.

The indigenous velvets and satins held their own against those imported from abroad. Besides such produce as indigo, spices and sugar, India exported to Europe manufactured cotton and silk. These manufactures must have given employment to numerous artisans. The following are the component parts of the amount of sales by the East India Company in England, reduced to an annual average, in the seventeen years ending 1808-9.<sup>9</sup>

Piece goods	...	£1,539,478
Orgauzine silk	...	£13,443
Pepper	...	£195,461
Saltpetre	...	£180,060
Spices	...	£112,596
Sugar, Indigo	...	£272,442
Coffee	...	£6,624

Muslins and calicoes used to be manufactured in various parts of India, especially in Bengal and the northern part of the coast of Coromandal. Dacca was the chief seat of the muslin manufactures. The Northern Circars and the neighbourhood of Musulipatam were the most distinguished for chintzes, calicoes and ginghams.

In regard to the general prosperity under Cultural Swaraj, Abul Fazl says in the *Ain-i-Akberi* :

"The whole extent of this vast empire is unequalled for the excellence of its waters, salubrity of air, mildness of climate and the temperate constitutions of the natives. Every part is cultivated and full of inhabitants, so that you cannot travel the distance of a Cos (two miles) without seeing towns, and villages, and meeting with good water. Even in the depth of winter, the earth and trees are covered with verdure ; and in the rainy season, which in many parts of Hindustan commences in June, and continues till September, the air is so delightfully

<sup>9</sup> H. Murray's "Discoveries and Travels," Vol. II, p. 375.

pleasant, that it gives youthful vigour to old age."

The only exception to this general statement noticed by the writer is Bengal. But even there considerable improvement would appear to have been effected during Abul Fazl's time. He says that "for a long time past the air of Bengal had been unhealthy at the leaving off of the rains, afflicting both man and cattle ; but under the auspices of his present Majesty this calamity has ceased."

That until lately the people of the United Provinces and the Punjab enjoyed good health is a well-known fact. Allahabad, Agra, Delhi and Lahore were looked upon as sanatoria. Even Bengal was, on the whole, not so fever-stricken, as a large part of it has been since the middle of the last century. "The Dutch Admiral Stavornus in his Memoirs," says Dr. Bentley, "gives a list of the diseases prevalent in the neighbourhood of Hooghly, but whilst alluding to dysentery and other tropical disorders, he makes no mention of fever or ague. In Valentia's 'Travels' there is no mention of Murshidabad or Berhampore being specifically unhealthy, and some of the

early records speak of this part as having once possessed a reputation for salubrity."<sup>10</sup> Towns like Hooghly, Bandel, Chinsura, Baraset, Krishnagar, Burdwan, Midnapur, Pabna, Malda and Birbhum, now hotbeds of malaria, were until about the middle of the last century considered as sanatoria. That despite political revolutions, India was able to maintain her Cultural Swaraj during the earlier years of British Rule is testified to by various writers. Sir Thomas Munro, notwithstanding his natural Western bias, declared emphatically that "If a good system of agriculture, unrivalled manufacturing skill, a capacity to produce whatever can contribute to either convenience or luxury, schools established in every village for teaching reading, writing and arithmetic, the general practice of hospitality and charity amongst each other, and above all a treatment of the female sex full of confidence, respect, and delicacy are among the signs which denote a civilised people: then the Hindus are not inferior to the nations of Europe, and if civilization is to become an article of trade between England and India, I am convinced that England will gain by the import cargo."

## PRACTICE OF RELIGION

By ANANDA

### IS RENUNCIATION NECESSARY?

At this point, it would be profitable to discuss the necessity of renunciation. Many fight shy of renunciation. Various arguments are put forward to prove its uselessness and even harmfulness. In our previous article, we have shown that the stock arguments against celibacy are mostly stupid and meaningless. Celibacy is the very basis of spiritual power. Without it any great progress in spirituality is impossible. And without renunciation true celibacy is almost impracticable.

Is renunciation necessary for progress in spiritual life? All religions and genuine religious teachers agree that without mental renunciation, God-realisation or Divine love is impossible to attain. They are all particular about this point. Of course, we hear now and then of crusades against renunciation by some of the modern teachers,—they are invariably all pseudo-sensualists. They may be great in other respects. We have a habit of considering a great man great in *all respects*. If there is

<sup>10</sup> "Report on Malaria in Bengal," part I, p. 28.

a great poet, we at once dub him a saint. If there is a great intellectual, we at once consider him a *Rishi*. And whatever they say on any subject, we accept as gospel truth. We forget that a man may be great in many respects, and yet he may be a veritable baby in religion. Religion is not spinning ideas. It is assiduous practice and *realisation*. There are moderns posing as teachers, who belittle renunciation, because they themselves are still in the grip of desires. But all genuine teachers, past and present, are unanimous on the need for at least inner renunciation. They all agree that the knowledge of the Not-self or the phenomenal world and attachment to it are the very antithesis of Divine knowledge and Divine love. The two are not on the same plane, one does not lead to the other. We must give up all consciousness of and desire for earthly things in order to know God and attain Him. So long as we have the slightest desire for anything other than God, we cannot have Him.

We are often misled by our desires. They do not always appear in their real garb. They sometimes assume holy attires and lead us to believe them to be spiritual. There are many subtle desires in the mind, of which we know nothing now. After the present gross desires have been eradicated, the subtle ones will emerge. Only *Sādhakas*, those who have renounced the objects of gross desire, can know them. Two are the greatest and basic enemies of spirituality, *Kāma* (lust) and *Kāñchana* (gold). These passions can and do take variegated forms. One must always analyse one's motives of thought and action. Even desire for service, apparently so noble, may sometimes be nothing but a veiled form of lust and passion for possession. We have, therefore, to be watchful every moment of our life.

Apart from these dangers of delusion, there is also danger from false philosophy. The modern age is pre-

dominantly materialistic. Materialism also has its finer forms. There is a materialism which is frank and open. It says that there is no God, no soul, no hereafter; that one is no more than the body; therefore, eat, drink and be merry. This kind of materialism has no longer much hold on men. But there is a subtle materialism which says that God alone is not enough, there must also be the universe beside Him. To know God alone is, according to the votaries of this creed, imperfection,—perfection is to know the universe along with God. And they advance many subtle arguments in support of their thesis. If reason and the teachings of other great teachers do not support them, they have no hesitation in calling them ignorant. We have known persons calling in question the knowledge of even the great Sankara! They say that there is a plane of mind where reason does not prevail. Things happen there, which we cannot evaluate by reason. There Self and Not-self co-exist, God and the world are inter-linked; and that is the highest state. This statement is easily misleading. It is true that God is beyond reason and that we cannot reach the superconscious plane through reason. But from this it does not follow that things on that high plane are irrational. Swami Vivekananda clearly stated that though the superconscious cannot be attained through reason, *it is not against reason*. All great teachers have upheld this view.

We can easily find out how erroneous the views of this school of thought are. All admit that the mind is limited and that Brahman is beyond mind. So long as the mind remains, the "knowledge" of Brahman is impossible. We have to go beyond it. Where there is no mind, how can there be a world there? Without the mind, the world cannot exist, for it is not an independent existence. Its existence is dependent on its knower. Perhaps the pseudo-materialists will say: "That may all seem true from the logical view-

point. But Reality is alogical. It does not abide by the laws of logic. So your arguments do not apply to it. We can know Brahman and the world at the same time." Reality may be above logic, but not our mind and knowledge. And it is after all *we* who are to know God. We cannot transcend our own nature. And our nature to its last limit is such that it cannot dwell on this alogical ground. In perfect reason alone is its stability, it cannot subsume contradictory principles at the same time ;—there is no rest for it till it has reached unalloyed unity. Repeated experience of *Sadhakas* and *Siddhas* has confirmed this fact.

What is spirituality? It is the complete cessation of *vruttis*. The universe, subjectively speaking, is nothing but an aggregate of *vruttis*. Spiritual progress consists in reducing the number of these *vruttis*, till the *vrutti* relating to God alone remains in the mind. We reach this state through concentration and meditation. We reduce the *vruttis* one by one. We concentrate the mind on a single object of meditation. Other *vruttis* gradually die away and only the God-*vrutti* remains. This is not, however, the culmination. We have to take a step further. The last *vrutti* also has to be destroyed. When that is done, Brahman alone remains. Mind dies. What remains none can tell. The Upanishad declares that from there words with mind turn back without reaching. Here also we find that God and the world cannot co-exist. For to know the world we must have the world-*vrutti* in the mind. But the moment the world-*vrutti* will arise in the mind, the God-*vrutti* will vanish. For the God-*vrutti* cannot arise in the mind till the entire mind has become one. Only the entire mind, unruffled by any other *vrutti*, can reflect the reality of God. The fact is, the opposition between Brahman and the world cannot be overcome by any means. There is a mysterious gulf between them, which is unbridgable. This new philosophy of the

alliance of God and the world should, therefore, be looked upon with suspicion. It is better and safer to be on the side of reason and the host of ancient and modern sages than on that of unreason and the crypto-materialists.

Why are they so eager to link God with the world? Because they have a secret, maybe unconscious, desire for the world. Their renunciation is not complete. Their mind is not yet fully ready for God. Hence this eager attempt at refuting the *Māyāvāda* and proving the eternity of the world. Time will show how false this philosophy is. It has not come out of actual spiritual experience and is little better than intellectual nonsense.

So renunciation is necessary. All teachers, therefore, emphasise at least mental renunciation. We must so train the mind that it may give up its tendency outwards and its attachment to worldly things, and may learn to dwell constantly on God. Wherever we may be, in whatever condition, we must learn to be non-attached to all other things than God. Distractions will come in the name of national service, of service of man, of kindness and pity, of intellectual ideals. He who wants God must rise above all these. These are all excellent things, and must be attended to by those who are still attached to the world. These will help them. But those who have felt in their heart of hearts that God alone is real, must forget all except God and devote their entire mind and energy to His realisation alone. The modern mind is apt to judge even God-realisation by its effect on society, nation and humanity. This is obviously a wrong attitude and is due to the prevalent materialism. The reverse is the truth : we must judge everything by its capacity to give us God-realisation.

We have considered in this article the necessity of mental renunciation only. The need of formal and external renunciation we hope to discuss in our next article.

## NEW REVELATIONS OF BARBAROUS CUSTOMS IN BENIGHTED INDIA\*

[FROM *American Weekly*].

Many new facts have recently been brought to light confirming and explaining the almost unbelievably degraded existence of the Indian races which Katherine Mayo revealed to an astonished world in her famous book, "Mother India."

News dispatches from various parts of India since the first of the year confirm the most distressing revelations made by many writers on the situation in benighted India.

At the Coimbatore Sessions of the court the British judge listened to the case of father and son, named Mari and Aran, natives of Velampalayam, who were accused of killing a five-year old Barbar boy. Their religion demands the sacrifice of a first-born child to propitiate a deity called Karuparayasami. So, during a busy evening in the harvest season, when all the villagers were occupied in the fields, the unfortunate boy was enticed to the house of the accused, where a small idol, specially made, was installed. The father and son performed the ritual, and the body of the little one was buried, but later on was disinterred and sunk in the village pond, where a searching party found the remains. Both of the accused admitted their guilt.

In the city of Baroda, the kidnapping of children for sacrifice started riots last month. Hindus attacked Mahomedans, and the disturbance grew in area and intensity until the local police were reinforced by British troops and armored cars, and already one hundred and thirty-seven have been killed and more than a thousand natives reported wounded.

A few weeks ago a dispatch from Calcutta reported the spectacle of an un-

kempt Indian, with numerous things hanging from his neck and body, and with a brass bell around his neck, travelling about the streets on all-fours, imitating the "moo" of a cow. This absurd beggar explained that he was doing penance for having killed a cow, and he was spending seven years of atonement for his sin.

And it is from this most backward country in the world that "wise men," the Swamis, Mahatmas, Yogis and Fakirs come to give lectures to idle American women, and teach them their superior philosophy of life.

It was hard to understand why the native women, the most pitiful and abused of their sex on the face of the earth, resist all attempts to rescue them from purdah (prison-like seclusion) and from suttee (burning widows alive). As often as any were led out of their wretched state they seemed determined to rush back to it, as horses run back to a burning stable. These and other apparent insanities and stupidities are explained in "Understanding India," by Gertrude Marvin Williams, recently published by Coward McCann, and by Miss Mayo's article in the *Cosmopolitan Magazine*, "Kindly Flames," and also by other authorities who are studying the subject.

Miserable though the short life of the average male native of India is, with his earnings of less than seven cents a day, always hungry to the verge of starvation, diseased, without plumbing, lights, underwear, towels, dishes, chairs or any furniture except a bed in his mud hut, illiterate, filthy, vermin-ridden and forced to drink sewage-flavored water, robbing the field mouse of its little hoard of buried grain, stolen

\* See "In this Number," *Notes and Comments*.



from the fields of the princes, nevertheless he lives the life of a king compared to that of the Indian woman. From the cradle to the grave she envies him.

To be born a woman in that land of calamity is the worst calamity of all. As soon as she is old enough to understand anything she learns that a woman is something inferior and contemptible. Not only is she doomed to be the slave of her future husband when she is half grown, but before he leads her into captivity she must be the uncomplaining doormat of the males of her own family.

All over India little girls of the poorer classes can be seen staggering around carrying their older brothers, who are sometimes so much bigger that their feet drag on the ground. These big brothers are not cripples, but just superior beings by virtue of sex, which gives them the right to eat first, enter doors first and have the first and best of everything in that land of eternal want.

After marriage she expects, and is not often disappointed, to be treated like a dog by her husband, who may be an aged man, to whom she is sent as a child. She then enjoys the rest of her life in *purdah*, which means behind curtains, where no masculine eye can see her. For economy and convenience she is confined in an inside room, almost without light or ventilation, causing five times as many women as men to die of tuberculosis. Still she has little cause to complain of an early death.

However, one beautiful hope of escape is held out to her—not in this world of course, but in another, and that explains her curiously stubborn attitude. If a girl follows each and every shameful rule laid down in the Hindu scriptures for subordinating herself to all male relations, especially her husband, who may have the divine right to walk on her, she may go to Paradise when she dies. But she must do even that properly—no throwing herself down the well.

Paradise by itself would be a poor reward, hardly worth working for, if

something really worth while did not follow.

The Hindu's somewhat peculiar Paradise, like his earthly existence, is run entirely for the benefit of the superior male. For the woman Heaven is just an eternity of playing the same old doormat.

The inspired gentlemen who invented that faith had to hand out something better to interest the poor soul, so while they were about it, they promised her the greatest boon she could have imagined—that in some future incarnation she might become a man.

It is that hope and promise which knocks out all attempts to help the Indian woman to improve her earthly lot. The unhappy creature reasons that to be a woman is such a hopeless and degraded fate that it is not worth improving. She wants to escape from that low estate and become a man.

If she pulls aside the stifling curtain known as the "*purdah*," appears in public unveiled, or otherwise tries to be the equal of the male, she throws away all chance of redeeming herself from a woman into a man. Should her husband die before her, even though he is old and she a mere child, everyone takes it as proof that she has been a somewhat unwilling doormat for his sacred feet. However, she can square herself with the sneering relatives of both families and with the powers above by committing *suttee*, or, as it is now spelled *sati*.

Even if she does not have much faith in Paradise or reincarnation, there are other and quite practical reasons which might make an American widow under similar circumstances feel that she might as well climb up beside her husband's remains and tell the priest to apply the torch. If she decides to survive, her head is shaved, such personal ornaments and other belongings as she may have are stripped from her and she becomes not only the slave of the men, but of the women, which is the very bottom of degradation—a slave of slaves.

There is one alternative. The family of her late husband may elect, by paying a small sum, to place her in one of the convents run for this purpose. In that case she is locked for life in a tiny cell and fed one meal a day. As it is nobody's business to see how the outcast gets along, and as the convent won't show a profit if its inmates are unduly long-lived, she is not likely to be overfed. There is no law to prevent a widow from running away at her husband's death. But also there is nobody who would receive her and no place to go but the street. Since the British put a stop to widow burning an increasing number of women have done this.

Not all Indian women adhere to purdah—veiled seclusion—to the extent of only leaving their suffocating seclusion to sit veiled outside the temple, getting only such whiffs of the odor of sanctity as may be wafted to their nostrils from within. Many of the wives in the tiny villages wear no veils or much other clothing when they help plough the exhausted soil with the same sort of crooked stick that Pharaoh's peasants used.

But when there is a village assembly or ceremony they veil themselves with great care, not so much for the sake of their husbands as to show some pretense to the caste from which they have somewhat backslid. It would hardly be fair to expect such facial modesty from the women of the lowest or "untouchable" caste, who are considered inferior to the animals, especially the cow, which is sacred. However, even these lowest of all forms of human life make some attempts at observing purdah. The worst feature of woman's life in India is that there are 12,000 widows today less than five years old.

Although the Hindu population is divided into four main castes, these are sub-divided until there are 2,300 sub-castes. This alone makes the seemingly simple life of the native more complicated than any civilized man's. Unless he is at the extreme top or

bottom of the social scale, he is constantly faced with the problem of whether it is his duty to abase himself before each person he meets or to high-hat him, and to what degree.

Sixty million people, about one-fifth of the population, belong to these "untouchables," forbidden to send their children to public schools, to enter the temples or even walk on the roads that pass the temples. Their work is limited to scavenging and one or two other wretched tasks, but, worst of all, they must not even go near the village tanks.

In many villages these pools, filled by the freshets, are the only supply of water for drinking, cooking and washing. The natives also cheerfully bathe in the tanks. To bathe in their drinking water, however, is more revolting to read about than to see. The tanks are so stagnant, foul and covered with green scum that these perennial mosquito-breeders could hardly be made more repulsive by bathing or anything else. Anyway, they are the only bathtubs there are, and no soapy taste is left in the water, because there is no soap. Streams are used for sewage, drinking, bathing and every other purpose.

The laundry problem, without soap and with so little water, might seem difficult. It is not. All but the very few rich, imitators of the "materialistic" West, know nothing about stockings, underwear, towels, sheets, handkerchiefs or other washables which bother the "materialistic" housewives of the West. No wonder the poets speak of the "perfumed East." The real mystery of the "mysterious East" is how to get along without any of the comforts or decencies of life.

The children go naked until their sixth year, even though married, and the men usually wear only a loin cloth. When a man dresses up he wraps himself in four yards of cotton cloth. A woman's sari, ten yards of cotton, is her complete wardrobe, draped about her so that it forms a waist, skirt and even a shawl over her head, in which to hide

her face from masculine eyes. There are no buttons and no sewing to be done. When a woman's sari or a man's dhoti is washed it is soaked in water and wrung into a club-like shape, with which the washer pounds it on a stone. That's supposed to loosen the dirt.

It would certainly loosen buttons if there were any. When the foreigner gives his laundry to a native to wash it usually comes back with every button missing on account of this rock-pounding process.

"In southern India, undiluted by alien invaders, even the shadow of an outcast is polluting," writes Mrs. Williams. "The shadow of an artisan at twenty-four feet, a farmer's shadow at forty-eight, a pariah's at sixty-four. They are sometimes required to wear a little bell to give warning of their approach and to stand back the required distance when they see a caste man. The "untouchables" themselves maintain more than twenty caste divisions. They are just as inflexible about intermarriage and interdining as their superiors.

Yet in the city crowds lepers rub elbows with others, unrebuked, as long as they are caste men. Gandhi, the native reformer, tried vainly to remove the curse from the "untouchables." Mrs. Williams quotes the following dialogue that occurred when he addressed a meeting of the outcastes at Dhasi:

"I am bound to see to it," he told them, "that you get enough clean water to drink and to bathe and to wash in. But will you give up eating carrion? It is such a filthy habit, and as long as you cannot give it up I may continue to touch you, but I cannot hope to succeed with the orthodox Brahmins."

Their spokesman replied: "If we are expected to dispose of dead cattle you may not expect us to abstain from carrion."

Gandhi told them that Brahmins who owned tanneries in large cities do not use carrion.

"That may be, but with us, the habit follows the profession," was the pariah's answer.

Gandhi persisted: "Is carrion delicious?"

"No, not at all."

"Well, I had thought it was. If it is not, and I can assure you of enough bread, milk and vegetables, would you give up carrion?"

There was a pause. Then the old spokesman said slowly: "I am afraid no. We must take counsel and then reply to you. It is an old habit and will persist in spite of you and us. Where is the use of giving a promise if we are to break it the day after you leave us?"

Yet many people think that England, by passing a few laws and "giving India her liberty," could transform such a race into a bright, prosperous, happy nation. In spite of the world's most abject poverty, India contains vast riches. For five years past India has absorbed forty per cent of the world's gold production and thirty per cent of its silver, and in 1919 is estimated to have taken one-third of the silver output. Over \$5,000,000,000 worth of the precious metals is lying idle in that starving country.

Most of it is held by the princes, whose wealth is proverbial, but a considerable amount trickles down among the lowly. When an American gets his hands on more money than he intends to spend at once he puts it in the bank or some form of security. Even if this does not pay him interest, it goes into some industry which pays wages from which he or other workers benefit.

The Indian, with his genius for doing the stupid thing, either buries his little hoard of gold pieces in the dirt floor of his hut or beats it into bangles to go around his wrist, where it remains useless to himself or anyone else until it is spent or stolen. The Prince does the same thing on a grander scale, strutting about aglitter with jewels and around his swarthy neck rope after rope of pearls. India wails that the world

should advance it the necessary capital to start the industries which would lift its starving millions out of destitution, yet it has not the sense to use that five billion dollars' worth of liquid capital lying idle.

Next to the packs of starving dogs that range the city streets, the most notable sight in India is its multitude of beggars. They line the approaches to the temples, mutilated children, men and women that are merely naked skeletons, holding babies covered with sores and flies, lepers with faces partly eaten away and exhibiting stumps of limbs. The last census, according to Mrs. Williams, showed only 857,537 beggars, but that was because it did not take in the main army—the holy beggars.

If the gods reward a Hindu by letting him reach the unusual age of 40, it is quite customary for him to turn his affairs over to his oldest son and set forth on a lifelong pilgrimage to Benares and all the other holy cities. However, he does not buy a ticket and carry traveller's checks. He has a soul above vulgar money matters. He simply saunters off down the road, without a penny in his pocket, wearing a yellow robe to show that he is holy. But he is still holier if he goes stark naked. The starving population owes this holy pilgrim a living and he collects it. There are five million of these pious parasites.

"I saw sannyasis and fakirs everywhere," writes the authoress of "Understanding India," "at conventions, in the bazaars, plodding through the dust of the Grand Trunk Road. The more extreme type goes entirely naked or wears the minimum of a rag about his waist. He lets his hair grow long, winds rope through it to make it look more dishevelled, and piles it on his head in a bushy, tangled mop. He daubs his face and body with filth and ashes of cow dung, which give him a ghastly pallor. He is our modern Saint Simon Stylites. He performs spectacular penances, holding an arm extended until it stiffens in that position, swing-

ing over a hot fire, sitting on a bed of spikes.

"He does this for his own salvation, and sometimes, no doubt, is sincere. Those I saw, sitting in naked rows in public places, impressed me as exhibitionists, pretending to ignore the gaping crowds, but, in reality, very conscious of us, and getting intense satisfaction from being stared at. Their eyes have a glittering leer from the use of drugs.

"They not only contribute nothing, but are a continuous drain upon their country. India's average income of \$25 a year is about the minimum subsistence level. It seems probable that the cost of these holy men, averaging together the thin ones who really fast and the fat ones who obviously do not, would not be less than that amount. These parasites must cost not less than \$124,000,000 a year."

Beginning originally with the cow, one after another all the animals have achieved some degree of sanctity and ought not to be killed. This silliness has spread now to cover even the insects. Jain monks wear gauze over their mouths for fear they might swallow a gnat and hurt it and they sweep the ground before their feet to prevent stepping on some bug or ant. When a dog's leg gets cut off by a railroad train, it is allowed to hobble around and starve on three legs. Nobody would dream of putting it out of its misery.

One of the surest ways for a Hindu to reach Paradise is to die holding a cow's tail. If he is wealthy, it is a good idea to add to this meritorious act by also endowing a goshala, a sort of old ladies' home for cows. But these institutions usually become merely places for the animals to starve to death in.

Pacifist, defeatist and retreatist though he is, there is still enough of the original two-fisted human being in the poor Hindu so that he is inclined to kill a few animals, holy or not, especially the tiger and cobra.

In other parts of the world the big animals are rapidly being exterminated,

but in India the warfare between man and man-killers is a curious exception.

Tigers in India are almost as good at killing human beings as men are at killing tigers. Statistics released recently by the Indian Government show that during 1927 1,033 persons were killed by tigers, while only 1,368 tigers succumbed to human rifles and traps, making very nearly one man killed for each tiger similarly disposed of. Against other wild animals India's record of self-protection is better. Wolves, for example, killed 465 humans and humans killed 2,439 wolves, a ratio of about five wolves to one man.

Leopards killed 218 humans and 4,390 of the leopards died by human hands, making over twenty leopards to one human being. Bears killed 78 human beings and man's efforts disposed of 2,739 bears, making thirty-five bears for every human sacrifice. The relative peacefulness of India's largest animal, the elephant, is indicated by the report of only 56 human deaths for which those animals were responsible, in spite of the large number of elephants in captivity and used as work animals or for riding. One hundred and thirty-six people were killed in India in 1927 by crocodiles and 85 by wild boars, the latter animals once deadly almost all over the world, but now virtually exterminated in nearly every other country. The most dangerous animals in India are still the snakes, although man is proving dangerous to them also. During 1927 19,069 people died by snake bite and 57,116 snakes died at the hand of man; a ratio of about three snakes disposed of for every human death.

Out of the general squalor and misery of this people, that averages to live less than 23 years, rise the stately palaces of the princes and also the largest temples in the world, bigger by far than St. Peter's in Rome or St. Paul's in London. Some of the palaces have staffs of 10,000 servants, which is not so expensive as it sounds because the best native servant works for \$5 to \$10 a month,

even for the extravagant European, and feeds himself. But the mighty army of the priesthood and those that wait on them is vast and expensive and all they give in return is a religion that forbids the Hindu to advance.

Drug addiction is so general that the British have found no way to begin to curb it. They regulate the sale, limiting the amount to any person to 188 grains of opium per day. Even that huge dose can be increased by simply going to a second store. Six and three-quarters grains cost only two cents, and mothers who work in the cotton mills give it to their babies to keep them quiet.

Education is one of the saddest features of all. A school teacher is paid 27 cents a day and would seem to be hardly worth that.

"The North Pole is the coldest spot on earth and explorers discover it by carrying a thermometer. When the thermometer reaches the lowest point, that is the North Pole."

The above was written by an Indian schoolmaster as the correct answer to an examination question. What must his pupils' knowledge be? There are in India 229,000,000 illiterates and only 18,600,000 who can read and write. Colleges have recently sprung up, hopefully turning out educated natives. But there are no jobs for educated natives because that five billion locked up in gold and silver is not used to start industries.

Among other things with which the British must wrestle is slavery. In upper Burma, near the Assam border, are jungles from which semi-wild people are still taken as slaves and occasionally, in the Naga hills, used for human sacrifice in religious festivals. The British are trying to stop it by buying all slaves at \$30 a head and setting them free to go hungry with the rest of the population.

Though the colleges teach their graduates nothing that can be turned to financial account the prisons seem to

do better. Here the convicts learn from each other, how to become servants, preferably to visiting Europeans or Americans. They continue to steal as they serve, but in such moderation that it is endurable and they are not arrested unless they take too much at a time. From the jails they go straight to the employment agencies, which consider their sentence as a sort of recommendation, not of character exactly but of training.

Sometimes the marriage ceremony is performed while the bride is still a baby in arms and then she does not leave her father's roof until she is at least partly grown up. . . .

The Hindu answers the world's criticism of his backwardness by asking to be let alone to consider higher things such as his spirit. But the rest of the world dare not let him remain in his filthy, plumbingless state because he breeds pestilences which spread to other parts of the world. In the last ten years, 3,750,000 have died in India of cholera. It is raging now in Bombay with 2,000 deaths in the latest report. There are over a million lepers at large. Between 1901 and 1911, 6,500,000 died of the bubonic plague. The 1918-1919 influenza epidemic came out of India after killing 8,500,000 there. Dysentery, typhoid, typhus and most every other

communicable disease is rampant in India all the time, a perpetual nightmare to the health authorities of Christendom.

So the world insists that India wake up and clean up, that it stop having more children than the land can feed, that diseases are to be gotten rid of by scientific sanitation, not religious ceremonies and that women must be treated a little more like human beings.

In 1921 there were 27,000,000 Indian widows, one widow in every five women and 12,000 of these widows were less than five years old. Most widows would still like to commit suttee to escape their dreadful life. The one moving picture scene that always arouses great applause in India is that of a widow burning herself to death beside her husband's remains.

But the Hindu has had a certain amount of revenge for foreign interference. He has sent his Swamis, especially to America, to preach and teach American women how to live the "higher life." And American women have paid to hear these "educators" from a nation 92 per cent illiterate, 3,000 years behind the times. They look with awe at the Swami's turban, little realizing that it is a sort of fool's cap, symbolic of the dunce among nations.

## ASHTAVAKRA SAMHITA

By SWAMI NITYASWARUPANANDA

निःस्पृहं मानसं यस्य नेराश्येऽपि महात्मनः ।

तस्यात्मज्ञानतृप्तस्य तुलना केन जायते ॥ १२ ॥

यस्य Whose नेराश्येऽपि in disappointment अपि even मानसं mind निःस्पृहं free from desire महात्मन of great-souled आत्मज्ञानतृप्तस्य of him who is satisfied with Self-knowledge तस्य his केन with whom तुलना comparison जायते can be.

12. With whom can we compare that great-souled one, contented with the knowledge of Self, who is desireless<sup>1</sup> even in disappointment?

[1 *Desireless etc.*—Even in disappointment the ordinary man cannot give up his desire. On the other hand, he often sticks faster to it. Such, however, is not the case with the man of realisation. He cannot really have any disappointment, because he has no desire.

But even when there are causes for disappointment (for he also engages in action and may sometimes fail), he remains unaffected,—he does not stick to his desires and suffer.]

**स्वभावादेव जानानो दृश्यमेतन्न किञ्चन ।**

**इदं ग्राह्यमिदं त्याज्यं स किं पश्यति धीरधीः ॥ १३ ॥**

एतत् This दृश्यं object of perception स्वभावात् in its nature एव verily न not किञ्चन anything (इति this) जानानः knowing धीरधीः steady-minded सः that (जनः man) इदं this ग्राह्यं acceptable इदं this त्याज्यं 'rejectable (इति this) किं why पश्यति sees.

13. Why should that steady-minded one who knows the Object<sup>1</sup> to be in its very nature nothing<sup>2</sup>, consider this to be accepted and that to be rejected?

[1 *Object*—the internal and external universe.

2 *Nothing*—in an absolute sense. The Self alone is existent. Everything else is really non-existent and is but an illusory superimposition on the Self. Hence the wise become unattached to the objects of the world and neither hanker after nor shun them.]

**अन्तस्त्यक्तकषायस्य निर्द्वन्द्वस्य निराशयः ।**

**यद्वच्छयागतो भोगो न दुःखाय न तुष्टये ॥ १४ ॥**

अन्तस्त्यक्तकषायस्य Of one who has given up worldly attachment from the mind निर्द्वन्द्वस्य of one who is beyond the pair of opposites निराशयः of one who is free from desire यद्वच्छयागतः coming as a matter of course भोगः enjoyment दुःखाय for pain न not (भवति is) तुष्टये for pleasure (च and) न not (भवति is).

14. He who has given up worldly attachment from his mind, who is beyond the pairs<sup>1</sup> of opposites, and who is free from desire,—to him any enjoyment<sup>2</sup> coming as a matter of course does not cause either pleasure or pain.

[1 *Pairs etc.*—such as, happiness and misery, heat and cold, etc.

2 *Enjoyment*—object of enjoyment. All our pleasures or pains arise from the attainment or non-attainment of the objects to which we are attached. But they cannot produce any pleasurable or painful sensations if we have neither attraction nor repulsion for them, and allow them to come as a matter of course.]

## CHAPTER IV

### GLORIFICATION OF SELF-REALISATION

**अष्टावक्र उवाच ।**

**हन्तात्मज्ञस्य धीरस्य खेलतो भोगलीलया ।**

**न हि संसारवाहीकैर्मूढैः सह समानता ॥ १ ॥**

अष्टावक्रः Ashtavakra उवाच said :

इह Oh भोगलीलया with the game of enjoyment खेलतः playing धीरस्य of the calm आत्मज्ञस्य of the knower of Self मूढैः deluded संसारवाहीकैः the oxen of the world सह with समानता equality or similarity न not हि surely (चलति is).

Ashtavakra said :

1. Oh, the sober-minded knower of Self who<sup>1</sup> plays the game of enjoyment, has no similarity to the deluded beasts<sup>2</sup> of the world.

[1 *Who etc.*—Because the enjoyment of the world is like play to a man of realisation who is unattached to it, and is not affected by it.

2 *Beasts etc.*—men attached to the world and buffeted by its joys and miseries. They cannot look upon the world as a play.]

यत्पदं प्रेप्सवो दीनाः शक्ताद्याः सर्वदेवताः ।

अहो तत्र स्थितो योगी न हर्षमुपगच्छति ॥ २ ॥

चङ्को Oh शक्ताद्याः beginning with Indra सर्वदेवताः all gods यत्पदं which position प्रेप्सवः hankering after दीनाः unhappy (बर्तने become) तत्र there स्थितः abiding योगी योगी हर्षः elation न not उपगच्छति attains.

2. Oh, the Yogi does<sup>1</sup> not feel elated abiding in that position<sup>2</sup> which Indra and all other gods hanker after and become unhappy.<sup>3</sup>

[<sup>1</sup> Does etc.—Because he feels that to be only natural to himself. We feel elated only when anything unaccustomed, yet much coveted, happens to us. But Satchidananda is our very being and is nothing unaccustomed to the knower of Self.

<sup>2</sup> Position—The Absolute Existence—Bliss Supreme.

<sup>3</sup> Unhappy—Because they cannot attain It.]

तज्ज्ञस्य पुण्यपापाभ्यां स्पर्शो ह्यन्तर्न जायते ।

न आकाशस्य धूमेन दृश्यमानापि सङ्गतिः ॥ ३ ॥

तज्ज्ञस्य Of one who has known That अन्तः inside पुण्यपापाभ्यां with virtue and vice स्पर्शः touch न not जायते is हि as आकाशस्य of the sky धूमेन with smoke सङ्गतिः contact दृश्यमाना appearing अपि even न not (जायते exists).

3. The heart of one who has known That is not touched by virtue and vice, as the sky is not touched with smoke, even though it appears to do so.

आत्मैवेदं जगत्सर्वं ज्ञातं येन महात्मना ।

यदृच्छया वर्त्तमानं तं निषेद्धुं क्षमेत कः ॥ ४ ॥

येन By which महात्मना by the great-souled one इदं this सर्वं all जगत् universe आत्मा Self एव alone (इति this) ज्ञातं is known तं him यदृच्छया according as he likes वर्त्तमानं remaining कः who निषेद्धुं to prohibit क्षमेत can.

4. Who can prohibit that great-souled one who has known this entire universe to be the Self alone, from<sup>1</sup> living as he pleases?

[<sup>1</sup> From etc.—The man of Supreme Realisation is beyond all customs and traditions. He does not care for nor can he act up to the prescribed laws of conduct. For these all are formulated as suited to ignorant minds. That, however, does not mean moral anarchy. For it is said in the scriptures that the man of realisation does not stoop to evil actions, as all evil propensities (samiskāras) are annihilated before the highest state of realisation is reached.]

आब्रह्मस्तम्बपर्यन्ते भूतप्राप्ते चतुर्विधे ।

विद्वत्स्येव हि सामर्थ्यमिच्छानिच्छाविवर्जने ॥ ५ ॥

आब्रह्मस्तम्बपर्यन्ते From Brahmā down to the clump of grass चतुर्विधे of four kinds भूतप्राप्ते in all things विद्वत्स्येव of the wise one एव alone हि surely इच्छानिच्छाविवर्जने in renouncing desire and aversion सामर्थ्यं strength (भवति is).

5. Of the four<sup>1</sup> kinds of created things from Brahmā down to the clump of grass, it<sup>2</sup> is the wise one alone who is capable of renouncing desire and aversion.

[<sup>1</sup> Four etc.—namely, Jarāyuja (born from uterus), Andaja (born from egg), Svedaja (generated by warm vapour or sweat) and Udbhijja (sprouting up). Here it means the entire creation comprising also gods and other subtle beings.

<sup>2</sup> It etc.—As long as a man is ignorant of the true nature of himself and the universe, he must have desires and aversions. Certain things he will consider good and desirable



and others opposite. But one who has known himself and the world as Brahman, sees only one and has therefore no special likes or dislikes. He takes things playfully. He may seem attached to one thing one moment, but the next moment he may totally forget it.]

**आत्मानमद्वयं कश्चिज्ज्ञानाति जगदीश्वरं ।**

**यद्वेत्ति तत् स कुरुते न भयं तस्य कुत्रचित् ॥ ६ ॥**

कश्चित् Scarcely one आत्मानं self अद्वयं non-dual जगदीश्वरं lord of the universe ज्ञानाति knows स; he यत् which वेत्ति knows तत् that कुरुते does तस्य his कुत्रचित् anywhere भयं fear न not (चक्षु is).

6. Rare is the man who knows himself as one without a second as well as the lord of the universe. He does what he knows<sup>1</sup> and has<sup>2</sup> no fear from any quarter.

[1 *Knows*—considers worth doing. A knower of Self has no duty, as ordinary men have, compelled by environments and their own limitations.

2 *Has etc.*—Because he sees nothing outside himself.]

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### In this Number

The present number may, in a sense, be called the India number, so prominently India figures in it. We expect our readers to exercise penetrating judgment in understanding the Indian articles contained in it. And perhaps we should warn our Western readers that not all of these are incant for them. . . . A foreign reader may easily misunderstand the first of the *Unpublished Letters of Swami Vivekananda* as printed in this issue. It is a severe condemnation of India. But if we do not not remember the Swami's passionate and worshipful regard for her, we shall mistake his meaning. This letter only shows that he was fully conscious of the defects—after all superficial and matters of detail—of his great motherland (it is a rebuke of love rather than condemnation) and wanted to remedy them. The remedy that he proposed will be found in the third letter of the present instalment. It is Dynamic Religion. . . . Our article, *A Diagnosis*, is written chiefly for the Indian readers. We have not attempted a detailed examination of the charges that foreigners generally bring against India. We should not be understood to have

accepted them as true. We have taken a bird's-eye view of the weaknesses of India and sought to trace them to a basic cause. . . . We regret that a mistake crept into the date of the last month's instalment of *The Diary of a Disciple*.—It was not the year 1911, but 1918. . . . We have great pleasure in presenting our readers with the first article on Sri Ramakrishna, *Ramakrishna: His Credo*, by ROMAIN ROLLAND. It is extracted and translated from the original French Ms. Our readers were aware that M. Rolland was engaged in writing a book on Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda. The first volume, that on Sri Ramakrishna, is ready and the original French edition will soon be published from Paris. M. Rolland has kindly granted us the exclusive right of publishing extracts from his book in the pages of *Prabuddha Bharata*. It would be presumptuous on our part to introduce M. Rolland to our readers, so esteemed and well-known is his name in every part of the world. Neither we nor our readers should expect that M. Rolland will represent his subject in the way the followers of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda do. As he himself says in the preface, his view-point is that of a

Westerner. And herein, in our opinion, lies the unique value of his work. . . . We do not know if we ought to have allowed *New Revelations of Barbarous Customs in Benighted India*, extracted from an American Weekly, to soil the pages of *Prabuddha Bharata*. The article possesses no special merit except that it is an exhaustive catalogue of all that are at present being maliciously propagated against India. Our purpose in publishing it, as we have mentioned in our article, is twofold: to show with what vindictive spirit India is being traduced in foreign countries, especially America; and to remind India that our objective passivity has caused some superstitions and evil customs to accumulate among us, which, though they have not made India on the whole worse than other nations except politically and economically, offer nevertheless opportunities to enemies to exploit them to our detriment. Our ideal is not to make India only *equal* to other nations, but much superior to them, perfect in every detail; and we have to that end pointed out the basic defect of our present outlook. We need not state that this malicious article is a strange medley of truths, half-truths and falsehoods, in which exceptional and isolated incidents have been often represented as common to the country and which shows a complete ignorance of the ways and ideals of India. The writer's characterisation of Indian women is particularly false. However much our women may be circumscribed in their scope and powers at present, they are yet by no means inferior to their sisters in other lands, and can, we believe, teach them many beautiful lessons in moral and spiritual qualities. We have not sought to answer the charges of the writer, because these have been answered ably by many writers, Indian and Western, before. Mr. P. N. Bose's article in the present issue is itself an able answer in some respects. We shall be satisfied if the perusal of this American article stimulates some of our

readers to do their duty by India,—outside by counter-propaganda and inside by improving the material conditions of the country.

### The Problem of Death

To all thinking persons death has and should have a tremendous importance. On a correct determination of its nature, depends the course of our life. Is there a post-mortem existence? Or does death end all? If so, the whole life signifies nothing, it is an empty dream. Naturally, consciously or unconsciously, each of us has a certain attitude towards life and death. To most of us perhaps death means annihilation, though we may profess other views. The position of the materialists seems most strange. If there is nothing beyond death, what does it matter how we live our life? What does it matter if the world prospers or not? Has progress any meaning?

Mr. Bertrand Russel is a materialist. Yet he wants humanity to grow great and good. Of course he has his own ideas of greatness and goodness. And these he seems to determine by his inner judgment, though it is not clear how he finds out the correctness of those judgments. He believes in knowledge, he believes in democracy, he believes in living scientifically. Perhaps he thinks that thus men will be happiest. But he himself will admit that happiness is not always the criterion. To find the true meaning of life and reality is to find the true criterion. The greatest of questions is still unanswered, if life has any meaning. And the answer cannot be had until the secret of death has been known.

The modern mind is seeking to build the entire life of man by avoiding these fundamental questions. The ultimate questions it does not want to answer. It is trying to propose a philosophy of life essentially on the basis of the sensible and knowable. That has been possible because man's

instincts are stronger than their reason and opinions. Instinct says that man must live,—it assumes the continuity of existence. Instinct prompts us not to rest satisfied with animal pleasures alone. Therefore man seeks knowledge, love, justice, goodness. Though it is the creed of a materialist not to assume anything, yet he assumes the truth of those instincts and hopes to build life on their basis. This is really a confession of failure.

In an article on Death which Mr. Russel lately contributed to *The Forum* (New York), he has similarly avoided the main issue. In that article it is not his purpose to unravel the mystery of death, but to propose the best means of conquering its fear and to suggest the most correct attitude towards it. 'There are various ways, he says, of attempting to cope with the fear of death. We may try to ignore it ; we may never mention it, but always attempt to turn our thoughts in another direction when we find ourselves dwelling on it. Or we may adopt the exactly opposite course and meditate continually on the brevity of human life, in the hope that familiarity will breed contempt. This was the course adopted by Charles V in his cloister after his abdication. There was a fellow of a Cambridge College, who even went so far as to sleep with his coffin in the room. There is a third course, which has been very widely adopted, and that is to persuade oneself and others that death is not death, but the gateway to a new and better life.

None of these, Mr. Russel thinks, are safe methods. Death is an emotionally interesting subject. To attempt to avoid thinking about emotionally interesting subjects is sure to be unsuccessful and to lead to various kinds of mental contortions.—Psychoanalysis has proved that. The second method is also equally harmful. It is morbid to always brood over death. This is a profitless subject of meditation, and it tends to diminish a man's interest in

other people and events, and it is only objective interests that can preserve mental health. Fear of death makes a man feel himself the slave of external forces, and from a slave mentality no good result can follow. The belief that death is a gateway to a better life ought, logically, to prevent men from feeling any fear of death. It does not in fact have this effect, except in a few rare instances. The reason for this apparent inconsistency is that religious belief, in most people, exists only in the region of conscious thought and has not succeeded in modifying unconscious mechanisms. If the fear of death is to be coped with successfully, it must be by some method which affects behaviour as a whole, not only that part of behaviour that is commonly called conscious thought.

What is the method then, that Mr. Russel suggests? We have to achieve three objects, he says, which are very difficult to combine. First, we must give the young people (Mr. Russel is considering the cases of children and adolescents specially) no feeling that death is a subject about which we do not wish to speak or to encourage them to think. Second, we must nevertheless so act as to prevent them, if we can, from thinking much or often on the matter of death. Third, we must not hope to create in any one a satisfactory attitude on the subject of death by means of conscious thought alone. To give effect to these various objects, we have to act as follows: In regard to the painful hazards of life, such as death, knowledge of them, on the part of children, should be neither avoided nor obtruded. Such knowledge should come when circumstances make it unavoidable. Painful things, when they have to be mentioned, should be related truthfully and unemotionally, except when a death occurs in the family, in which event it would be unnatural to conceal sorrow. The adults should display in their own conduct a certain gay courage, which the young will uncon-

ciously acquire from their example. In adolescence, large impersonal interests should be set before the young, and education should be so conducted as to give them the idea (by suggestion, not by explicit exhortation) of living for purposes outside themselves. They should be taught to endure misfortune, when it comes, by remembering that there are still things to live for. But they should not brood over possible misfortunes, even for the purpose of being prepared to meet them. One must say to oneself: "Well, yes, that might happen; but what of it?"

Mr. Russel's prescription is certainly useful. He has based it on the findings of modern psychology. It has been found that unwise handling of young minds often creates in them complexes and biases that prejudicially influence the entire course of life and behaviour. Most men and women suffer from these carelessnesses of their parents, teachers and guardians. If the latter are careful, they may spare the coming generations much suffering. But we confess we do not consider Mr. Russel's prescription adequate. It consists of two items. The first is to avoid forming complexes in the young minds. This is all right. The second is the initiation of young minds into impersonal interests. Here *impersonal* is the important factor. But are most persons so constituted as to be interested in impersonal projects? We do not think so. To have real impersonal interests, one must have a highly developed mind, unselfish and altruistic. Most men are egotistical, narrow and selfish. And even when they are interested in impersonal concerns, it takes the form of fanaticism or blind following. Such sort of disinterestedness avails little against the fear of death. One must be really taken out of one's ego. But how many can be done so by Mr Russel's process?

The fact is, Mr. Russel's attitude and prescription are typically materialistic. He simply avoids the main issue.

Death is too tremendous to be easily coped with. We must attack the main problem which is whether there is anything in us which survives death and if we can feel ourselves as only that and not as the perishable parts. At present we feel ourselves as body and mind, and these, at least the body, we perceive to be ever changing and know will perish in death. Can we withdraw our consciousness from the body and mind? If we can, we at once go beyond the range of death. *The conquest of death and fear of death lies in knowing and perceiving oneself not as body and mind, but as a being transcendent to them and to all change and destruction.* This experience is the essence of immortality, and not mere beliefs, religious or otherwise. Mr. Russel is quite right in saying that our entire behaviour, conscious and unconscious, must be modified. The experience of immortality must interpenetrate our entire being. He admits that in a few instances religious belief can effect this. Why does it not affect the majority? The fault does not lie with religion, but with the men who do not understand religion properly. Mr. Russel's experience is mainly of the Christians. Their idea of immortality, we confess, is of a poor sort.

Hindus do not look upon immortality as a mere article of faith, proved only by a resurrected Christ. We say we must practise and realise it even now. We must conquer death even in this body. And there is a way by which we can do it. It is the concentration of consciousness and withdrawing it from body and mind. Thus we go beyond all change and destruction. All Hindu religious practices are meant to accomplish this,—the transcendence of body and mind. That is why every Hindu is expected to sit in meditation, in calm and silence, at least twice a day, trying to realise himself as the Self beyond body and mind. It is true that the highest results are achieved only by a few. But a vast number also do get a

taste of their incorporeal being. This is the way to immortality and to the conquest of the fear of death. By such attempt at concentration, we go beyond the stage of mere belief to that of at least a vague, dim experience. Even such a slight experience is of great value. Even a little of it conquers great fear. One feels that one has risen above the jurisdiction of death and even if the body perishes, it matters little to one. This may be tried by many with more or less result. Hinduism is particular that this practice of concentration should be begun even in an early age, for then the mind is pure and plastic and receives impressions lasting through life.

Apart from the conquest of the fear of death, concentration of mind also makes the mind immune from unhealthy biases and complexes, and eradicates those which are already there. In fact the practice of concentration has a wonderful effect on both body and mind; and it yet stands above all modern methods of education, supreme in its correctness and efficacy.

### Evolution and Reincarnation

A correspondent has put the following question to us:

"In the reincarnation of souls, I somehow lean to the belief that once a soul is born as man, it is always afterwards born as either man or something higher in the scale of evolution. Is my belief correct?"

In reply to this question we have to say that the theory of evolution does not warrant our correspondent's belief. It is true that the evolution of the physiological structure is accompanied by a corresponding mental evolution; and that the higher the evolution of body, the higher the development of mind. From this it may seem to follow that when a mind which has once inhabited a human body is reborn, it must have at least a human body. But the theory of *karma* and reincarnation does not say that in a particular birth

the *entire* mind becomes operative. If the entire mind were active in determining the form of the new body, it is possible the reborn man would not be subhuman in physical form. But the Hindu belief is that all *karmas* or *samskâras* do not operate at every time. Some only are active, others passively bide their time. And those which are active are not necessarily human always. We have many base desires unworthy even of animals. When these *vrillis* predominate and produce the body, that body must necessarily be subhuman, of animals or worms. There is no knowing when which *vrillis* will grow strong in us. Even in a saintly person, an evil passion may rage for some time. Of course the value of our previous human birth is not thereby lost. When the worse *vrillis* are worked off, our upward path becomes clearer and easier.

A common error that results from the uncritical acceptance of the theory of evolution is the conclusion that since in course of evolution lower animals have developed into higher, man can never again become a lower animal. The utmost that can be inferred is that the human *species* will grow into a superhuman species. [But is that true? Are there not also retrogressions? Evolution need not necessarily be progress. Evolution is only change, whether for better or for worse depends on the environments. In human history we find noble civilised races degraded into half savages.] It has no place for reincarnation. In so far as men are parts of the species, they continue to live on and grow in their progeny. But when they die, they go out of the earthly species; they have no longer anything to do with it. Their future is then determined by their predominant and active *karmas* and they may be born as either men or animals or worms. Then they enter into the evolving life of new species and partake in and influence them as long as they live. It is as it were many different moulds of life have been

created on earth with their graded spiritual values. Individuals cast themselves in them from life to life according to the nature of their prevailing *karmas*; they are not permanently related to any of them. The moulds—the species—may have interconnections with one another, one having developed from another. They have their separate lives, with their own laws of being and growth which are constituted at any given time by the individuals partaking in them. The theory of reincarnation thus presupposes two series of lives, of the species and the individuals, individuals not being permanently related to the species.

But is the theory of evolution after all true? Has it been incontestably proved? We still have our doubts.

### America's Debt to India

We reproduce the following paragraphs from Mr. Ernest Wood's Introduction to his recently published book, *An Englishman Defends Mother India*. The quotation is sufficiently interesting to need any apology from us for its length.

"Does the average American know how great is the debt which America already owes to India? I do not mean in any merely spiritual way, but with respect to civilization and the practical character of American affairs. Let me show how India helped America in the last century.

"There are two things which strike the visitor to this land as characteristic. First, the American believes in the future, that is to say in the unlimited possibilities of human progress. This is idealism. It makes him always ready to try to improve . . . . . Secondly, he is practical. This is common-sense idealism, and ideal common-sense. He may not have worked it out in theory, but in fact his acceptance of the world and its laws is a sort of tacit belief that God is not only in His heaven but in His world. He believes that the best can be got

out of life by honestly tilling that plot of land which has been given to him to till. . . .

"Now, if we read the essays of Ralph Waldo Emerson we find that these are the two things which he propounded over and over again in different forms. He said that ploughing was prayer, and that there is no bar or wall in the soul where man, the effect, ceases and God, the cause, begins. Great numbers of young people listened to him and his thought affected many other speakers and writers; so he had much to do with the building of the nationality and character that we now call American. His belief in the great possibilities of man's future was the outcome of his transcendental outlook, and was expressed in such sayings as: "Everything is fluid to thought."

"Emerson was greatly assisted in these inspirations by his study of Hindu thought. It is related that on a certain occasion a party of young men came to the philosopher and desired to know how they might become learned. He told them to read good books for five hours every day. They asked, "What books?" His answer was: "Any good books that you like." But as they were about to depart he called them back and said, "But do not forget to read Hindu books." It is said also that in his last years he always carried a pocket edition of the *Bhagavad Gita* about with him.

"I have been in his library at Concord, and have seen there the early English translations of various Sanskrit books which were familiar to me. Having obtained the unusual privilege of staying there a little while, I took some of those books from the shelves and looked at the pages where he had put little bits of paper to mark the places of special interest to him, and there were to be seen many of the thoughts with which he was so much in tune.

"In this way America owes a debt to

India in connection with those very qualities of character which America

values most and for which the rest of the world admires America."

## REVIEW

**KALKI OR THE FUTURE OF CIVILIZATION.** By S. Radhakrishnan. Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., Ltd., Broadway House: 68-74, Carter Lane, London, E. C. 4. 96 pp. Price 2/6 net.

"Philosophy in the larger sense of the term is the unseen foundation on which the structure of a civilization rests." This sentence in the beginning of the third chapter of his book indicates the sense in which Prof. Radhakrishnan is a philosopher of the first rank. For in the small volume under review, he takes the entire Western civilization for his subject, studies its realities and ideals, considers its conflicts, confusions and aspirations and suggests reconstruction on spiritual foundations. The book is a small one; the delineation of the subject has necessarily been brief. But within the prescribed limit he has wonderfully succeeded in giving us a true inner and outer picture of the Western civilization and the goal towards which it is struggling. We say "Western civilization" advisedly, though the Professor speaks of "civilization" only. For, in our opinion, his study and observations do not apply in any real sense to conditions in the East or India.

Why has he named his book *Kalki*? Because he feels that the future of civilization depends greatly on a spiritual upheaval and the present conditions are such that such an upheaval can be easily expected. "The author of a Hindu text *Vishnu Purana* asks us to take thought and expect the advent of the next Avatar, Kalki, when society reaches a stage where property alone confers rank, wealth becomes the only source of virtue, passion the sole bond of union between husband and wife, falsehood the source of success in life, sex the only means of enjoyment, and outer trappings are confused with inner religion."

The book has four chapters: Introduction, The Negative Results, The Problem, and Reconstruction. The plan is excellent. In the first chapter, the author gives us a general outline of the problem. There is restlessness everywhere. A new world-unity is being sought after. There is outer unity

to some extent. But the outer unity has not resulted in an inner unity of mind and spirit. In the second chapter, he makes a rapid survey of the Western world, its Religion, Family Life, Economic Relations, Politics, and International Relations. Here we have a picture of conflicting ideas and realities. We gave our readers a sample in pp. 255-257 of *Prabuddha Bharata* (May). This descriptive chapter prepares us to appreciate his next chapter which seems to us to be the best chapter in the book. He dwells therein on the fundamentals of human civilization as determined by the eternal verities and demonstrated by human history. Human personality is composed of three constituents, body, mind, and spirit. We have so far achieved mastery over matter and life, but not over mind. "Unless the mind is interpreted as one with spirit, we have not reached the ideal of civilization." Life must be spiritualised. Spiritual values are the only true values. In the assertion of the spiritual values lies the hope of civilization.

This chapter is so convincing that all reasonable minds will find it easy to accept what solutions the author gives in the last chapter of the religious, domestic, social, political, economical or international problems. We wish we had space enough at our disposal to give a detailed idea of those solutions. We can, however, say that it is on the whole a vindication of the Hindu view of life, though the Professor nowhere expressly says so. This is a point on which we feel almost inclined to quarrel with the learned author. He seems almost afraid to wound the susceptibilities of the Western mind, bolstered up as they generally are by the superiority complex. He remarks in one place that no civilization is perfect and that the world-civilization will be the harmony of all existing cultures. Quite true. But we must not forget to mention that some civilizations may supply the basic conceptions, the fundamentals, of the desired world-harmony and are thus more valuable than the others. Hinduism, the Professor must concede, is one such; and the West must

bow down before India's wisdom as we have bowed down before the material sciences of the West. Anyhow, it is a pleasure to see the Professor again vindicating his position as an able interpreter of India's ideas and ideals to the West.

Though the book is obviously meant for Western readers, it has in a sense a greater value for Indian readers, especially for those who are infatuated by the partial civilization of the West. We recommend to them the third chapter specially. Moreover, just now we need self-confidence based on an unprejudiced comparative study of the Indian and Western civilizations. The present book will be greatly helpful in this respect. We earnestly recommend it to the serious attention of our readers.

**THE MESSAGE OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.** By K. S. Ramaswami Sastri, B.A. B.L. Sri Ramakrishna Math, Myslapore, Madras. 50 pp. Price As. 4.

The present is the second edition of the booklet which embodies a lecture of the author dealing with the message of the great Swami in its various aspects. Besides other things, he deals with the spiritual, moral, political and social aspects of his message to India as well as to the West. Indeed the author has been successful to cover a wide ground within the compass of these few pages. The topics touched by him are of great moment at the present time and are sure to throw a flood of light on many a problem of the day, though we do not think that he has been always correct in his interpretation of the Swami's views, e.g. his views of British Government. The printing and get-up in this edition have been improved. We hope the booklet in its present form will be more welcome.

**THE HINDU COLONY OF CAMBODIA.** By Prof. Phanindra Nath Bose, M.A. Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras. 140 pp. Price Boards Rs. 2-8.

We regret the inordinate delay in reviewing the book. It is indeed highly gratifying that Prof. Bose of Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan, has been doing inestimable service to the general public by presenting them with the results of his investigations into the forgotten domains of Greater India. In the present well-written volume he has presented the story of Cambodia. He has based his work on the Sanskrit inscriptions of Cambodia and the researches of the French savants who are mainly responsible for the

unearthing of the past glory of India in the French dominions. We heartily welcome this publication and highly commend it to the careful attention of the public. We congratulate the author on his labours in this untravelled field of scholarship and hope he will continue his services in the way he has already done.

It is rather unfortunate that at present Indians do not possess any knowledge of the spread of Indian culture and civilisation and the beautiful remains that still testify to India's glory in other countries. The story of the spread of Indian culture in the Far East is fascinating. It is generally assumed that Hinduism is not a proselytising religion. But how can we then explain the propagation of Hinduism among the Khmer people of Cambodia as early as in the early centuries of the Christian era? Hinduism took the people of other faiths into its fold, and there was no prohibition against the preaching of the Hindu Faith among the non-Hindus.

It would be very interesting if we could present to our readers the story of how the ancestors of the Hindus crossed the seas with their religion, culture and civilisation and established them in Cambodia. For want of space we shall satisfy ourselves with only introducing the royal dynasty and concluding with a few words on the cultural conquest in Cambodia.

The Hindu colonisation of the country, now known as Cambodia, took place in the first century of the Christian era. The country was then known as Funan which maintained its power till the fifth century A. D., when Cambodia rose up from its ruins. The Indian royal dynasty was established in Cambodia in the sixth century A. D. The first Indian who came to Funan was a Brahmin, Kaundinya by name, who married a Nāgi called Soma and founded the kingdom of Funan. But this Kaundinya was not the real founder of Cambodia. It is Kambu Svayambhuva, a mythical personage, from whom the kings of Cambodia trace their descent. He is the Manu of Cambodia and may be regarded as the founder of the royal dynasty in Cambodia.

Of Kambu Svayambhuva was born Srutavarman who is taken as the first Indian king of Cambodia. Indians had already made themselves masters in Funan and Champa. Through the Indian kings and colonists of Funan, Indian culture had already begun to spread in Cambodia also. With the



establishment of the Indian royal dynasty in Cambodia, Indian manners and customs began to obtain a firm hold in that country.

On the throne of Cambodia we find successively as many as thirty-two kings beginning with Srutavarman and ending with Jayavarman VII up to A. D. 1201, after which the country declined and gradually came under the power of Siam and France. Cambodia had thus been ruled over by Indians for seven centuries. All the kings bore the title of Varman like the kings of Champa, such as Bhavavarman, Jayavarman and Rājendravarman.

The history of Cambodia begins with the history of Indian colonists in that land of the Khmers. With the coming of Indians the Khmer people came in contact with a higher civilisation and were very soon influenced by that culture. From the very beginning of the first century of the Christian era the Indian colonists had colonised Funan and for five centuries politically dominated that land. From the sixth century onward, the centre of influence was transferred to Cambodia, which became like Champa another stronghold of the Hindu civilisation. Indian culture and civilisation began to spread over the whole peninsula from these centres. The kings of both these countries became the custodians of Indian culture in these foreign countries. The Indian kings married the Khmer princesses and Indianised the whole Khmer population. In some cases the Khmers modified the Indian manners and customs with their own beliefs and traditions. Thus grew up the Indo-Khmer civilisation in Cambodia with a distinct Indian stamp on it. The king always assumed an Indian air. His palace breathed an Indian atmosphere. In the royal court there were Brahmins, astrologers, singers, ministers, generals and a host of other officials as in an Indian court. The principal queen, as in India, had a special position of honour. The *rāja-guru* was there, always advising the king on spiritual matters. Even the religion of the king and his people was Indian. The king used to worship the God Siva who became the presiding deity of the kingdom. From

the sixth century to the twelfth century A. D. we find the God Siva's popularity in Cambodia unimpaired. Not only Siva but other Hindu Gods and Goddesses also were introduced into the Khmer country. The manner of worship was quite Indian. The king and other donors used to make liberal grants for the maintenance of the temples and for the worship of the Gods. Priests were specially appointed for these purposes. Whenever a new town was built the image of Siva or some other God found a place there. The kings of Cambodia were very fond of building new temples and images. We scarcely meet with any reign which did not witness the erection of a new temple or a new image. Except the first few, all the kings were great builders, and they covered Cambodia with magnificent temples and monuments. Of these builder kings we may mention the names of Indravarman I (877-889), Yasovarman (889-910), Rājendrarman (944-961) and Suryavarman II (1112-1152) who erected the magnificent temple of Vishnu, known as Angkor Vat which is the master-piece of Khmer architecture. In these temples Hindu Gods and Goddesses were enshrined and received homage from the Indianised Khmer people. Hinduism on the whole made a deep impression upon the people of Cambodia who readily took to the worship of Siva, Vishnu, Durgā, Chandi, Sri and other Gods and Goddesses. The Buddhist images were also worshipped. Many Indians of great eminence and learning like Agastya and Bhatta Divākara went over to Cambodia from India to spread Indian culture in that land. We find the use of the *Rāmāyana*, *Mahābhārata*, *Purāna*, the grammar of Pānini, the logic of Kanāda, and the system of Patanjali in that land. In Cambodia Indian manners and customs even now play an important part. The people of Cambodia even at the present day profess Buddhism. The culture they have inherited is purely Indian in character, and the Indian colonists helped the Cambodians in the making of the Indo-Khmer civilisation.

The country, as is well-known, is now a French possession.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

**R. K. Veda Vidyalaya, Gadadhar Ashrama, Calcutta**

A report of the Vidyalaya for the year 1928 is to hand. It is highly gratifying to mark

its rapid progress in every respect. It was in July, 1922, that the Veda Vidyalaya was ushered into existence as an institution annexed to the Gadadhar Ashrama with a

small class of 9 students. The number during the last year was 40. As many as eleven subjects widely covering different branches of Sanskrit learning were taught in the institution by 4 competent teachers and 1717 lectures were given on all the subjects during the year. In 1928 the institution sent up 10 students to appear in different examinations under the Board of Sanskrit Examinations, of whom 8 came out successful. This year also students are being prepared for the same purpose.

The Vivekananda Vani Bhavan is a decent library attached to the Gadadhar Ashrama which has made in the course of last eight years a choice collection of books numbering over 1000, chiefly on Indian philosophy and religion. Besides the gift of several almirahs of books made to the library, purchases also to the value of Rs. 186-5-0 were made during the year under review. The total income of the library during the year was Rs. 215-6-9 and the expenditure amounted to Rs. 214-15-9. Several weeklies and monthlies were also received by the library as free presents. The total expenses of the institution during the 14 months from the beginning of November, 1927 to the end of December, 1928 came up to Rs. 3,224-4-0 leaving a balance of Rs. 549-12-0 in hand.

It is needless to mention that the cause for which the Vidyalyaya stands is dear to the heart of every Indian who values the ancient cultural glories of India with which the highest spiritual concerns of the people at the present date and indeed for all times are bound up. The Veda Vidyalyaya as a centre diffusing knowledge of the ancient Hindus is meant to supply a real need of the present-day society. It is confidently believed by the organisers that as time passes and the Vidyalyaya continues steadily to function, its activities will come to be known and appreciated and thus the ardently cherished dream of Swami Vivekananda regarding the revival of the ancient Vedic culture will be realised to some extent. We earnestly hope that the public will send liberal help to *Secy., Sri Ramakrishna Veda Vidyalyaya, 86A, Harish Chatterjee St., Bhawanipur, Calcutta.*

#### **R. K. Mission Vidyapith, Deoghar, Behar**

The Vidyapith completed its seventh year of service in the field of education in 1928, a report of which has recently reached us. Located in a most beautiful and healthy

place and conducted by the dedicated lives of a group of educated monks and Brahmacharins, the institution affords the greatest facility to the young pupils towards their all-round physical, æsthetic and spiritual growth with a spirit of consecration, catholicity and devotion to the ennobling cultural ideals and traditions of their country. The number of students on the roll fluctuated between 56 and 60. The health of the boys during the year was quite up to the mark. The institution maintains some poor and deserving students free and at concession rates. Religion is made here the basis of training. The institution observes all the Hindu festivals and holds ceremonies in honour of many prophets and saints. Moral instruction is also sought to be inculcated through daily prayers and religious discourses. Sacred books are prescribed as supplementary studies. Besides regular physical exercises, various games are organised for the boys. They are also trained to develop in themselves a spirit of self-help and dignity of labour in ordinary household work. Small patches of garden managed by the boys themselves give them also scope for culturing their æsthetic taste. The organisation of boys into a "Sevak Sangha" has advanced further by the establishment of a "Boys' Own Court" which was formed of a panel of judges elected by the boys. It works under the supervision of a teacher. Through the Sangha the boys learn to conduct meetings, deliver lectures and tend their diseased mates. Music, First aid, Hand work, Nature study and other allied subjects also form a part of the curriculum. The main features of the daily routine are that emphasis is laid on early rising. Classes are held twice daily morning and afternoon, and provision is made for devotional songs and hymns early morning and evening. The recurring expenses of the institution were met from students' fees and public contributions, but expenses for buildings were met from funds specially raised for that purpose. The receipts of the general fund including last year's balance amounted to Rs. 19,698-5-11 and the running of the institution entailed an expenditure of Rs. 12,248-10-0. The building fund left a balance of Rs. 1,175-8-9. The needs of the institution are Library, Lecture hall and Office in one building; Segregation Ward; School Building (classes are now held in dormitories); two more Dormitories for the boys; a Guest house; a Dining Hall; a Cowshed and some cows; a

fund for the maintenance of deserving indigent students; a fund for the maintenance of a number of paid teachers with special qualifications; and some up-to-date educational equipments.

We heartily congratulate the management on the success they have achieved in the line of work they have chosen, which, we believe, will be highly useful to the country in many respects; and we hope the institution will grow more and more in future in order that it may extend its beneficence to the ever-increasing number of pupils.

All contributions to be sent to *Secy., Ramakrishna Mission Vidyapith, Deoghar, Behar.*

#### **R. K. Mission Students' Home, Madras**

The twenty-fourth annual report, for the year 1928, of the above institution is to hand. A visitor has already presented our readers with a detailed description of the Home in the pages of this paper in January last. Another article on the educational ideals of the Home has been published in the last issue. We therefore barely touch upon a few figures and statements of the year under review.

During the year the construction of the staff-quarters was begun and the workshop equipment was added to. The old boys of the Home has started a quarterly magazine which will provide an account of the Home and also form a medium for the discussion of educational, literary and religious topics of common interest. The number of students on the roll at the end of the year was 137. The tutorial staff consisted of eight resident

teachers each of whom was in charge of 15 to 18 boys. The life and activities of the boys outside the class hours were looked after by the ward masters and the house-hold management of the Home was as usual in the hands of the boys themselves. Religious classes were held morning and evening. Lessons from the Ramayana and the Mahabharata as well as the lives and teachings of the great saints were given to the younger boys, while the Gita was expounded to the grown up students. The younger boys were also taught to chant Sanskrit devotional verses of Sri Sankara and Yamunacharya. Students attended the physical training class thrice a week in the mornings. They are trained in the Noehren's system of physical activities, besides the Indian systems of indigenous exercises. The health of the students during the year was satisfactory. The Residential High School and the Industrial School went on very efficiently. In the latter the third year classes in (i) Carpentry and Cabinet-making, and (ii) Mechanical Foreman and Fitter's work were opened. The number on the roll in the Industrial School was 25 at the end of the year. The total receipts on all heads amounted to Rs. 43,854-10-0 and the expenditure to Rs. 44,101-5-5. The management conclude the report with an appeal to the generous public and confidently believe that they will assist them liberally in achieving their objects and making the institution an ideal one in every way.

We congratulate the management on the splendid work they are doing. All help may be sent to *Secy., Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, Mylapore, Madras.*

#### **Ramakrishna Mission Flood Relief in Assam.**

Swami Suddhananda, Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission writes:—The public are already aware of the terrible devastation caused by the recent heavy flood in Assam. The whole of Surma Valley is practically under water. In some villages water rose from 10 to 12 feet high. Thousands of people whose homesteads are completely washed away are without any shelter. Innumerable carcasses of cattle, etc. could be seen floating past the waters and the number of human victims also has been considerable. The rich are to-day in the same footing with the poor, as almost everything has been washed away or damaged by the flood, and both stand face to face with starvation and in the jaws of impending epidemics.

Our workers who are in the field have already begun relief from 6 or 7 places with the help of running boats. We want the co-operation of the generous public to be able to do the work as effectively as possible.

All contributions sent to any of the following will be thankfully received and acknowledged—

- (1) THE SECRETARY, Ramakrishna Mission, P. O. Belur Math, Dt. Howrah.
- (2) THE MANAGER, Advaita Ashrama, 182A, Muktabar Babu St., Calcutta.

# Prabuddha Bharata

AUGUST, 1929

Volume XXXIV



Number 8

“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।”

“Arise! Awake! And stop not till the Goal is reached.”

## UNPUBLISHED LETTERS OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

XV

(To an English Friend)

Srinagar, Kashmir,  
1st October, 1897.

Some people do the best work when *led*. Not every one is *born to lead*. The best leader, however, is one who “leads like the baby”. The baby, though apparently depending on every one, is the king of the household. At least, to my thinking, that is the secret. . . . Many feel, but only a few can express. It is the power of expressing one’s love and appreciation and sympathy for others, that enables one person to succeed better in spreading the idea, than others. . . .

I shall not try to describe Kashmir to you. Suffice it to say, I never felt sorry to leave any country except this Paradise on earth; and if I can, am trying my best to influence the Rajah in starting a centre. So much to do here, and the material so hopeful! . . . .

The great difficulty is this: I see persons giving me almost the whole of their love. But I must not give any one the whole of mine in return, for that day the work would be ruined. Yet there are some who will look for such a return, not having the breadth of the impersonal view. It is absolutely necessary to the work that I should have the enthusiastic love of as many as possible, while I myself remain entirely impersonal. Otherwise jealousy and quarrels would break up everything. A leader must be impersonal. I am sure you understand this. I do not mean that one should be a brute, making use of the devotion of others for his own ends, and laughing in his sleeve meanwhile. What I mean is what I am, intensely personal in my love, but having the power to pluck out my own heart with my own hand, if it becomes necessary. “for the good of many, for the welfare of many,” as Buddha said. Madness of love, and yet in it no bondage. Matter changed into spirit by the force of love. Nay.

that is the gist of our Vedanta. There is but One, seen by the ignorant as matter, by the wise as God. And the history of civilization is the progressive reading of spirit into matter. The ignorant see the person in the non-person. The sage sees the non-person in the person. Through pain and pleasure, joy and sorrow, this is the one lesson we are learning.

*(Again to the same)*

Too much sentiment hurts work. "Hard as steel and soft as a flower" is the motto.

## SRI RAMAKRISHNA ON THE OUTLOOK OF RENUNCIATION

[FROM THE DIARY OF M.]

### I

It was the evening of 7th September, 1884. A lamp had been lighted in Sri Ramakrishna's room at the Dakshineswar Temple, and incense burnt. Sri Ramakrishna was sitting on his bed thinking of the Divine Mother and repeating Her name. M., Niranjan and Adhar were sitting on the floor.

It was a moon-lit night, and the riverside, trees, temples and pathways were flooded with the silvery light of the moon.

Adhar Chandra Sen was a Deputy Magistrate earning Rs. 300 a month. He had applied for the Vice-Chairmanship of the Calcutta Municipality, which had a monthly salary of Rs. 1000, and in order to secure it, had interviewed many important persons of Calcutta.

Sri Ramakrishna said: "Hazra had asked me to pray to Mother that Adhar might have the job. Adhar also had requested me. I prayed a little saying: 'Mother, he has been coming to You. If You so like, why not let him have the job?' But I also added: 'Mother, what a low outlook! He asks a job of You and not Knowledge and Love!'

"(To Adhar) Why did you dance attendance on those low-minded men?—And this after seeing and hearing so much! This has been like asking who was the husband of Sita after reading the entire Ramayana! Mallik is a low-minded man." . . .

*Adhar*: "To maintain a household, one has to do these things. You also did not forbid me."

*Sri R*: "It is abstaining from worldly desires and affairs, which is good, and not being actively engaged in them. After I had reached the present spiritual state, the Temple manager, as usual, sent for me to sign my name to get my salary. I said: 'I cannot do this. I do not want any pay. You may give it to whomsoever you like.'

"I am the servant of God alone. Whom else shall I serve?

"Seeing that my meal becomes late, Mallik engaged a cook for me. He paid one rupee for one month. I felt ashamed. I had to run to him whenever he sent for me. That was quite different from going of my own accord.

"To worship low-minded men—this is what a householder's life means, besides many things else. . . .

"Continue with your present service. People are eager for fifty or hundred rupees, but you are earning three hundred rupees. I saw a Deputy Magistrate in our part of the country. His name was Iswar Ghosal. He had a cap on his head and people trembled before him in awe. A Deputy Magistrate is no small thing!

"Do what you are doing now. To serve one man is enough to soil one's mind, what to speak of serving five men!" . . .

*Adhar* : "Should Narendra engage in service?"

[Narendra (Swami Vivekananda) was at that time in very straitened circumstances. His father had died and he had to maintain his mother and brothers. He was, therefore, searching for some employment. In fact he had been engaged for some time as the Head Master of Vidyasagar's Bowbazar School in Calcutta.]

*Sri R* : "Yes, he should. He has to maintain his mother and brothers."

*Adhar* : "Suppose Narendra can manage with fifty rupees a month. Should he try to earn a hundred rupees?"

*Sri R* : "The worldly-minded think too highly of money. They think that there cannot be anything as good as this. Shambhu said : 'It is my wish to offer all my properties at His feet before I die.' Does He want property of us? He wants Knowledge, Love, Discrimination and Dispassion. . . ."

"Sejo Babu (Mathuranath) said that he would make me a gift of a landed property. He and Hriday were talking about it. I heard them from the Kali temple. I came out and said to Sejo Babu : 'Look here, don't think of doing such a thing. This will do me great harm.'"

*Adhar* : "There have been six or seven persons at the utmost in the history of the world, who had such renunciation as yours."

*Sri R* : "Why, there are men of renunciation. People come to learn when one renounces a big property. But there are men of renunciation, of whom the world does not know."

*Adhar* : "Yes, I know of one in Calcutta—Devendranath Tagore."

*Sri R* : "What do you say? Who has enjoyed so much of the world as he? When I went with Sejo Babu to his house, I found many children to whom a doctor was prescribing medicine. Who will think of God if not he who has so many sons and daughters? If after enjoying so much worldly pros-

perity, he had not thought of God, people would have cried fie on him."

*Niranjan* : "He paid off the debts of Dwarakanath Tagore."

*Sri R* : "Away with such talks! Don't you annoy me! Is he a man, if he, having power, does not liquidate the debts of his father? But it is true he is much better than the common run of householders who are totally immersed in worldliness. He will be an example to them."

"There is a great difference between a man of true renunciation (*tyāgi*) and a householder devotee. A true *Sannyāsīn*, one who has truly renounced, is like a bee. A bee will not sit on anything else than flowers. It will drink nothing except honey. The householder devotee is like a fly which sits now on a sweetmeat and again on a festering sore. He may remain in a Divine mood for some time, but will again lose himself in *Kāminī* and *Kāñchana* (woman and gold).

"The real *tyāgi* is like the *chātaka* bird. That bird does not drink any other water than what drops from clouds on the day that the moon is in conjunction with the *Svātī* star. Even though water fills all the seven seas and rivers, it will not drink that water. The *tyāgi* will not touch *Kāminī* and *Kāñchana*. And he will not keep them with him, lest he become attached to them."

## II

*Adhar* : "Chaitanya also enjoyed."

*Sri R* : (*startled*) "What did he enjoy?"

*Adhar* : "He was such a great scholar and so much honoured!"

*Sri R* : "From others' view-point it seemed honour, not from his."

"I tell you truly, it is all same to me whether you respect me or Niranjan respects me. I never think of having a wealthy man in my hands. I was told by Manomohan that Surendra had said I could be prosecuted for keeping Rakhai here. I said : 'Who is

Surendra? He has kept a mat and a pillow here and gives money?" "

Adhar: "I think he pays ten rupees a month?"

Sri R: "No, ten rupees do for two months. He pays for the service of the devotees who stay here. He is earning religious merit thereby, what does it matter to me? Do I love Narendra and Rakhal for any personal interest?"

M: "Your love is like a mother's."

Sri R: "A mother, however, often loves her son because he will one day maintain her by his earnings. But I love them, because I actually see, and not merely imagine, that they are Narayana Himself.

"Listen. If you can light a fire, you will not have any lack of moths. If you once realise Him, He will provide you everything, He will not keep you in want. If He reveals Himself in your heart, many will come to serve you.

"A young Sannyasin once went to a house to beg alms. He had been a monk from a very young age and was, therefore, quite ignorant of the world. A grown-up girl of the family came out and gave him alms. He asked the girl's mother: 'Has she got boils on her chest?' 'No,' the mother replied, 'God has given her breasts in order that the child that will be born of her womb may suck milk from them.' At this

the monk exclaimed: 'Why then should I worry? Why should I beg any more? Even He who has created me, will give me food.'

"The naked one (Tota Puri) spoke of a prince who entertained *Sādhus* in gold plates and tumblers. I saw an abbot at Benares, who was highly honoured by people. Rich Marwaris stood with folded hands before him to carry out his orders.

"A true *Sadhu*, a real *tyagi*, does not want either gold plates or honour from people. But God does not keep him in want. He provides him whatever is necessary to attain Him.

"You are a Magistrate. What shall I say? Do what you think best. I am but ignorant."

Adhar: (*smilingly to the devotees*) "He is testing me."

Sri R: (*smiling*) "It is better to abstain from worldly desires and activities. Don't you see, I did not sign. *God alone is real, everything else unreal.*"

[Adhar passed away within about one month of this conversation. The Master wept bitterly on learning this news. On his very first meeting with Adhar in April, 1883, the Master had spoken to him of the transience of life and asked him to devote himself entirely to God.]

## BEAUTY AND DUTY

BY THE EDITOR

### I

We confess that it is with diffidence that we are taking up the present theme. Art and literature are not perhaps within our immediate scope. But since art affects life profoundly, we have been forced to look into it for the sake of life. For we have to do with life. No, we do not deny life, monks though we are. A political leader of Bengal recently gave out that

*Sannyāsa* and asceticism meant the denial and extinction of life, and he charged them with the decadence of India. Nothing could be further from the truth. It is best people do not talk of things which they do not know. One plain fact would have shown his error. The most glorious period of Hindu history, the Buddhistic period with the Gupta Empire as its sequel, was also the most brilliant age of

monasticism. Without the Buddha's monks, where would have been the achievements of that magnificent age? How was the greater India created?

No, we monks do not deny life. What we do is to try to stand on the peak of life and from there visualise the lower strata and find out their proper values and scopes. This high level is not the special privilege of monasticism. It is not peculiar to the yellow-robed. It belongs to the highest humanity everywhere. Whoever wants to realise the true and the highest vision, must climb to the summit of life and from there view the plains. Otherwise his vision will be partial and unbalanced, and he will lack the true standard of measurement. In order to have a full and comprehensive vision, all life and activity should be estimated with a detached outlook. Artists, litterateurs, poets, novelists, politicians, economists, socialists, philosophers, scientists, all must outgrow their sectional outlooks, and view life as a whole. Then only will all things fall into their proper places and harmony emerge.

We have noted with pain that this all-comprehensive vision has been conspicuously lacking in our country for some time. Great minds have again and again over-emphasised their own provinces, overshadowing the higher provinces or smothering the lower ones. Art and literature have not been exceptions. As a result, even third-rate artists and writers have been putting forth audacious claims, wanting to regulate the national and individual lives according to their imperfect and unclean ideas. We have noted this with pain and have seen high ideals dragged down and trampled under foot. How can a nation grow without noble ideals? Where will it draw its strength from? We wish our leaders had spoken with a steady and stern voice. But they have not.

We have tried to find out the cause of this defection. Why do they not

stand for the spiritual ideals? Why do they allow the glorification of the flesh to continue unchecked? Why are their affirmations of the Spirit always hesitant? So far as we have understood, the reason is nothing but that they do not *practise* what they believe and profess. They do not try to realise the spiritual ideals. Formerly, every gentleman, whatever his vocation in life, used to devote some time to his spiritual practices. What a difference between an *Āyurvedic* physician and a modern doctor, between a professor of a college and a *Pandit* of a *tal*! The *Kavirāj* and the *Pandit* consider spiritual devotions an important part of their daily life. The doctor and the professor are supremely indifferent about them. Formerly, spiritual practice was considered an integral part of life, now it is the fashion to be ungodly. Our society never forgot that leaders of activities, professions and knowledge exert a tremendous influence on the life of men, and that if they prove faithless to the high ideals of the nation, they will eventually destroy all good. Society, therefore, expected every one to owe heartfelt allegiance to the spirit. That allegiance could not be real without some apprehension of the spirit itself. Hence the urgent need of daily spiritual practice. A glimpse of the spiritual life, however vague and dim, is enough to produce an indelible impression of its reality. With that certitude abiding in our heart, we could not judge wrongly and lead ourselves and others into confusion and eventual ruin. But the moderns do not practise, even when they talk of the spirit. How, then, can they expect to have a balanced view of life and reality? To them, the spirit is only a name, practically non-existent. Their allegiance to the spirit is only lip-deep, not genuine. The inevitable result has followed. Lower ideals have been emphasised and the higher ideals have been insulted in their hands.

We have the province of Bengal



specially in our mind as we write this. But we think our observations have more or less application to other provinces of India as well. In Bengal, just now, all sorts of ideas about life and reality are running riot. Some writers are extremely loud in their glorification of the animal in man. Some of them are good penmen, having earned some reputation. Most of them are novelists and poets,—they cannot deal with sterner stuffs. They could be easily ignored and left to the mercy of time, had they not stood forth in the name of art and life. Their conception of art and life could also be ignored, had not the West stood behind them with its secularism and glorification of the animal. The power that they wield is not really their own. They are only the instruments of a mightier thought-force which is sweeping over the world and seeking to defeat the powers of the spirit. The temptations of the flesh are always strong in men. Our *Samskāras* in regard to them are already powerful. The writings of these animal-worshippers are stimulating them to a degree and consequently devitalising the nation. Some ten or twelve years ago, the newspapers of Calcutta scarcely ever published any notice of the theatrical performances of the city. Attendance at theatres was not considered quite good form and edifying. Now the journals publish columns of dramatic criticism. University men and women are appearing on the stage and even ladies of high respectable families are practising as film-actresses and dancers. We do not mean to taboo amusements. What we want to point out is that Bengalees have become more prone to enjoyment than before. They have become more fond of the sweets of life and effeminacies. They are indulging too much in dance and song and poetry and fiction. The Bengali literature is scarcely producing any noteworthy serious works; only fiction and poetry are being produced abundantly. Are the Bengalees equally

prominent in strenuous, manly activities? We regret to say that progress in manly qualities has not been commensurate with the progress in emotional indulgence. The ideals of manly men are in danger of being swamped by the excrescences of the flesh. In this we are proving but foolish imitators of the West. In an evening party in the West, you can point to scores of people who have achieved nobly in the field of life. Enjoyment suits them. For only the hero can claim to enjoy and indeed truly enjoys. But consider a party of our own. Of how many can we say that they have achieved manlike and nobly? What is their credit? Forsooth, some have written a few poems, others a few short stories or novellettes,—mostly anæmic and obnoxious, others again can sing, dance and act. Are we to stand on these feminine achievements in the face of the world? Are these our credentials before the assembly of nations? We may fool ourselves for a time, we may fool time for some years. But neither our true self nor time will for ever stand this nonsense. We shall be called upon to do better and manlier things in order to live and grow on the face of earth, or we shall be brushed off mercilessly into the abyss of oblivion, in spite of all our dance and song.

## II

Strange that what we feel in our heart of hearts to be wrong and debasing become correct and ennobling in the name of art! Does art possess this alchemy? How far can art replace morality in the life of a nation? What is art? Art by its very nature is extremely illusive. This is the main reason why the quarrel between art and morality is difficult to compose, and the claims of art become easily exorbitant. Beauty and joy, again, are apt to delude us, depriving us of critical judgment. Yet, these are the very reasons why

art should be properly understood and its claims and scope critically estimated.

We may begin by considering the case of those who are claiming that art lies in depicting the realities as they are in disregard to social or moral conventions, if need be, in order to show them off as beautiful and enjoyable. This they call realism. Can art deal with *all* subjects? But is realism really art? In so far as realism depicts the true state of things, ugly or beautiful, low or noble, it is scarcely art. It then only supplies material, and no work of art is merely its material. Even such realism, however, is not without its utility. Sometimes conventions grow so strong and rigid that they cramp life. Life decays, but we hold on to the encrustations. That is extremely unwholesome. Then realism truly helps. It reveals the true state of things, to ignore which is sure death. Literature helps by such revelation. But realists necessarily have a serious responsibility on their shoulders. In order that their labours may be beneficial, they must be very careful to stamp their revelations with the marks of their true value. They must not exaggerate or embellish them or change their value. The balance of judgment must be evenly maintained. Those who ignore these responsibilities are neither artists nor realists in any sense. They are merely craftsmen, employing their craft for a base purpose.

But of course our so-called realists claim that they do not merely describe, but that they also beautify. They treat the material in such a way as to produce the sense of beauty and joy. This is the claim of all artists; and yet some works of art are poisonous and others embrosial. What makes the difference? The difference must be sought in the determination and creation of values. Artists oftentimes delude by creating false values. It is often forgotten that the values of reality cannot be created by artists. The values are independent of individual men,

however great. The Creator himself has stamped realities with their respective values. We cannot subvert them. Matter, mind and spirit are the three prominent gradations of reality with their graded values. We experience phenomena as either of these and are impressed with their inherent values. An artist cannot suddenly rise and say that matter is superior to mind and spirit or mind to spirit. If he says so, he deludes, and the moral and spiritual sense of mankind should ostracise him.

But we must remember one point in this connection. Our experience of reality is not ultimate. It is true that so long as our vision of matter persists, its fixed value also persists. But what we now consider as matter, may reveal a finer content to a purer vision. In fact the experience and habit of the common man is not ultimate. In knowing the reality as he does, he has not his fulfilment. He requires to experience reality in other lights. These other lights the artist claims to supply. Art, therefore, consists in revealing higher and finer selves in things apparently low and gross. We look around us, but the inherent beauty and nobility of things do not strike us. Most things seem ugly or indifferent. But to the artist they do not appear as such. He finds beauty and joy in them. This beauty and joy he reveals to us in such a form as to make us also see and feel like him. This is art.

From this it apparently follows that to the artist reality has no objective value. Reality changes its value in his hands. To the average man, the flesh may seem evil, but to the superior vision of the artist, it may appear as heavenly, worthy to be glorified. No doubt art can perform this alchemy. But a close scrutiny will reveal that the standard of value does not change the least. If the vision of the artist be true—we shall see later on what true æsthetic vision consists in—flesh must appear transformed. *That is to say, it must not produce the same reactions in the*

*artist's mind as flesh itself. The reaction must be of a higher and finer reality revealed in and through the flesh.* Here is the crucial test. If the appeal is of the flesh alone, only intensified, it is no art, at least no good art. It has not achieved that transformation of reality which is the essence and basis of all true art. So art in fact does not change the value of reality. It only reveals a higher reality through the lower one. Spiritual experience confirms this artist's vision. Everything to the supreme vision is spiritual. What to us appear as gross, dull and dead, appear to it as embodiments of the Divine itself. There is, therefore, an immense possibility in all things. We have only to acquire the new vision and the world will bare the ineffable beauty hiding in its bosom.

But it is said that art grows out of the feeling of beauty and joy. If a thing gives joy to the artist and appears to him as beautiful, why should he not present it to the world as delectable? This is the artist's privilege, they say, to feel as beautiful and reveal as beautiful, whatever might be the objective value of the subject presented, or whether it has undergone the required transformation or not. This claim is nothing original or dignified. All men have the power to allure and deceive. Such deceptions are going on around us everyday of our life. Simply because one possesses the art of versifying or composing fine phrases, one's practice of deception does not become dignified. The greatness and nobility of the artist lies in charming in order to uplift. To uplift,—this is the distinction of the artist. A prostitute that allures by the beauty of her person, and an artist that lures the mind to the flesh by celebrating its charms,—where is the difference between them?

But what is this feeling of beauty and joy, which the artist emphasises so much? Is it so transcendental and ineffable as to be incapable of determination? Is there no standard by which

we can judge between joy and joy and beauty and beauty? Yes, there is. *It is life itself.* There are innumerable levels of life and perception. Every man has his normal level. It depends on his *Samskaras* (mental tendencies). These are the forces which give shape and direction to his perceptions, desires and activities. We enjoy what are nearest and most akin to our *Samskaras*. They appear most important, real and delectable to us. All other realities seem distant, shadowy, unattractive. We cannot enjoy them or dwell long on them. We have drawn a circle around us with the *Samskaras* as its radii along which we move and feel. Every man moves within his circle. Those who have strong sensuous tendencies will naturally dwell mainly on the sense-plane, glorying in sense-objects and finding them beautiful and delectable. If they happen to possess artistic powers, they will naturally consider the sensuous vision as the highest and present it as such. The materials they will deal with will be sensuous, and the treatment of those materials will also be sensuous. Higher realities will be beyond their reach and comprehension. But there are others who possess nobler and purer *Samskaras*. They live on the higher planes of life. They will easily find the world of their experience to be beautiful and blissful and not the world of the senses. If they are artists, they will reveal to the world the glory of those higher realities. That is not all. They will take up the lower realities also. But they will treat them in such a way that they will reveal undreamt of beauties in their being, nobler and finer, and react upliftingly on the human mind.

It is these individual worlds in which we live because of our different *Samskaras* that determine our different standards of beauty and joy. It is not necessary to dwell at length on the existence of such different standards. What, however, is being disputed is that there cannot be any gradations of

those standards. Morality and social conventions speak of gradations. Our pseudo-artists deny them. How to judge what is higher and what is lower? The answer is in our own heart, in our own personality. However loudly we may repudiate the spiritual ideals, human history and experience cannot be gainsaid. It is said one cannot commit fallacy knowingly. The past experience of mankind has deeply impressed its mind with the truth that the higher a man, the intenser and wider is his feeling of reality and the greater is his perception of unity with the world. We feel a deep infinite being in our soul. We feel ourselves as wide as the infinite universe itself. A sense of cosmic power pulsates in our being. The little things of life and world do not affect us. So long as we have fear, so long as we feel awed before the majesty of the universe, we have to admit that the experience of one feeling oneself above the turmoils of the universe and as its master, is infinitely superior to our puny experiences. We may talk high-sounding philosophies in repudiation of this fact ; but the knowledge of the superiority of the spiritual experience is indelibly impressed on our mind and we have to bow down our heads before it. Let artists come forward and stand before such an ineffable experience ; they will at once know their true place. To-day they may talk loud and defy, but to-morrow they will be nowhere.

It is this sense of being and personality that determines the true value of our artistic vision. The wider and deeper our being, the more spiritual we are, the more real and noble is our vision of the beautiful. It is quite true that all spiritual persons are not artists, nor are all artists of the same spiritual experience equally great as artists. Artistic genius is a thing apart. Poets are not made but born. But this is also true that without great spiritual vision, no artists, however great, can create noble works. His genius will be

cramped and distorted. He may have the form, but he will lack substance. This is the test : When we feel a thing to be beautiful, do we also experience a widening of being, an intense consciousness of the reality, and an uplifting of the mind beyond the trammels of the body and the pettinesses of life? Then this is a higher vision. If, on the other hand, our perception of beauty draws us more and more to the lower grades of reality, we are indeed caught in the lower vision. The sense of the beautiful is judged by the personality behind. Personality is judged by the sense of inherent power and sense of being and reality. Power and sense of being are estimated by mental exaltation and widening of consciousness, by unity with the Universal Being and by the renunciation of the lower self. All art must submit to this test. Both the creators and enjoyers of art have to judge art by this standard. It is no arbitrary standard. It is the standard inherent in the constitution of life and reality themselves.

### III

And here morality joins issue with art. Morality propounds certain ideals of feeling and conduct and condemns their opposites. Nowadays men are not wanting, who consider morality as merely born of use and make light of it. They do not know. There is an Eternal Being, who is the soul of our soul. Our fulfilment lies in knowing and identifying ourselves with him. By thus realising him, we also realise the universe as true, beautiful and good. That is the *summum bonum*. All realisations are states of consciousness. The realisation of the Divinity also implies the expansion and transmutation of consciousness. The moral qualities in their full development are nothing but aspects of that cosmic consciousness. Truthfulness, selflessness, chastity, kindness, all follow from this. For all these are implied by the unity of the individual being with the

Eternal, Universal Being. How, then, can we say that morality is merely conventional? And if morality is not conventional, can it be set aside in favour of æsthetic enjoyment? But we need not assume a necessary conflict between art and morality. If what we have said above of art is true, it can never lead us astray. It will also produce the same exaltation and expansion of spirit, which is the vocation of morality. The methods may be different. But art will in essence be always faithful to morality. Morality is not a mere formal observance of certain rules of conduct. It is more of the mind than of behaviour. Both art and morality must be faithful to life, if they are not to be false and unreal.

But the conflict becomes apparent and sometimes real in the realm of conduct. Morality implies certain modes of conduct. In this aspect, it is strengthened and confirmed by social usages and conventions. Society has built up, through its experience of ages, a set of traditions and conventions which it thinks will prove beneficial and helpful to its members and protect and safeguard them from disintegrating and decaying. By its very nature, dealing as it does with numberless persons with diverse inclinations and temperaments, it cannot look always into their interior;—it emphasises more the form than the meaning. In a sense, social laws are deliberately more concerned with the forms of conduct than with their meaning. They are pragmatic in their outlook. They necessarily tend to become fixed and inexorable. Art thus finds itself in conflict with them. Laws of social conduct are promulgated often with the outlooks of the average men in view. For most members are of the average mentality. It is for the good of those common men that the society mainly exists, though thereby the presence of idealism in social laws is not denied. Now the common mind has attached a fixed value to everything. If the genius of an artist seeks

to subvert that value, it feels upset. Until it has been taught greater refinement of feeling and perception, the artist will fail to convince and benefit it. Of course realism of the kind we have described above, will avail it. So also artistic productions which only clarify and beautify what is already within the orbit of its movements, and which deal with elemental notions of life and experience such as we find in epic poems. But any art that seems to upset the fixed values, will prove bewildering. Should art be allowed to do so? We know that art, if it is true, will ultimately prove helpful to life. It will not degrade it. *But what about the confusion meanwhile?* In our opinion, where there is a conflict between social morality and art, art should not be allowed to subvert social morality.

The common men are not guided by the sense of the beautiful in their daily life. Their guide and background are essentially moral and social ideals. They control, and satisfy their desires, know and act mainly in reference to those ideals. Art plays only an insignificant part in their life. If any art, therefore, impair those ideals, it takes away from the people's strength and unsettle their basic conceptions. People lose their way and are confused. The overwhelming majority of men are progressing towards life's fulfilment through allegiance to moral and social ideals. Very few there are, who are essentially worshippers of beauty and love. These few can easily ignore social conventions. For they have another guide in their fine perception of beauty and love. Society is, therefore, justified in eschewing art when it conflicts with its cherished ideals and its essential codes and conventions. This does not mean that art suffers ignominy thereby, but only that all art is not for all.

#### IV

Unfortunately, the modern facilities and freedom of publication and circula-

tion do not make any regulation of art possible. All things reach all people and do both harm and good. No doubt there may be constituted bodies of experts, who may give lead to the people by their wise criticism of art-productions. But that means that the judges should not only be masters of the arts, but should also be faithful spokesmen of the spiritual ideals of the nation. For artistic judgment is essentially a judgment through emotional appreciation. But how to know to what level of life and being the evoked emotions belong? Emotions engulf the mind, absorb the self for the time being; and make us forgetful of its bearings on the larger aspects of life and reality. And we cannot know of any defect in our appreciation unless we are also masters of the highest experiences. A combination of spiritual vision and artistic appreciation, however, is rare in all ages.

But this combination would not have been necessary if there were no danger to national ideals from artists. Unfortunately, poets, novelists, story-writers, all have taken upon themselves to reform society and to guide mankind. The claim is at once ludicrous and mischievous. They are doing a great harm to people. In Bengal, things are undoubtedly extremely unhappy. There the need to protect social morals and conventions against the pseudo-artists is indeed urgent. It is our opinion that the power to check this evil and assign its proper place to art and harmonise it with life, does not lie in art and literature themselves. It lies in that which is most intimately concerned with life and reality, *noble living and action*. We have already mentioned that most persons are moral in temperament and only a few are æsthetic. So most men must be guided through moral and spiritual effort. Social laws are framed after the pattern of moral laws. The majority of mankind, therefore, must find inspiration in and through religion. When religion

has been made a living power in their life, they will live on a plane of consciousness, where no ignoble things will ever succeed in deceiving them. This higher mentality has to be developed among our countrymen. And then let the artists do their worst. If they are fake artists, they will at once be found out, and spurned to oblivion. If there is any true work of art, it will be appreciated by the people,—by the few, if it is of an unusual merit, and by many, if it is based on the general conceptions of life and reality. Such art-productions will always prove helpful to life, for they will always uplift.

We know this will not necessarily purify art. Every level of life will ask for artists to celebrate its possessions and visions. They will not create and uplift, but they will contribute to the enjoyment of the already achieved. There is no great harm in that. Only let them not claim to have revealed the highest when they are only celebrating the gross and the low. Let them not claim to lead. True art reveals and is, as such, spiritual in its effect. But a correct estimation of art is not possible unless the sense of the higher reality is awake in us. Hence morality and religion must precede art.

We are not unaware that the average life when it is given essentially to religion and morality, has the danger of becoming dry and conventional, and of stifling the sense of reality. We know this. But in India at least, religion has never slept over this danger. Whenever life has ebbed away, it has brought an influx of power from its perennial source and made life flow vigorously again. But in spite of that, art is certainly a check to the devastating effects of formal religion. When life becomes conventional and unreal, when social morals become rigid, art reveals their absurdity. It sympathetically brings to the surface all the agonies and injustices which the rigors of morality and religion are inflicting on the submerged classes, and glowingly paints

the hopes that are waiting unfulfilled. It gives voice to our imprisoned powers and foreshadows the bright future yet unrealised. Then art makes social conventions change and re-orientate themselves, morality find new expressions and religion reinterpretation.

But never never for a moment let us forget that art by itself cannot lead and save. The power that saves cannot come by the worship of the beautiful, for the worship of a weak person will really be only an insult. Only the strong can enjoy. Let us first become strong. Let us be conscious of our spiritual being. In India at least, the time is not yet when we can take to art for art's sake. Only the art that will

be the handmaiden of national and spiritual aspirations can be of any help now. The art that glorifies the already achieved is not for us. What shall it celebrate? A nation of weaklings and slaves, millions and millions of whom do not know what it is to enjoy a full meal, cannot afford to debilitate itself by songs and dances now. Let us first win the battle of life. Let us be men first and then gods themselves will sing their celestial songs in our court.

To-day we want men of action, manly men by thousands and millions, and leaders who have scaled the highest peak of reality and yet whose hearts throb in unison with every phase of being. Such indeed can lead and fulfil, and inspire all truly and harmoniously.

## THE DIARY OF A DISCIPLE

8TH MAY, 1912.

Swami Premananda, one of the foremost disciples of Sri Ramakrishna, was in charge of the Belur Monastery. The Swami was a very attractive personality and seemed almost to exude purity and love.

After the noonday meal, he began to speak enthusiastically of Sri Ramakrishna to the assembled monks and devotees. He said :

"Seeing that the Master liked lemon much, Yogin (Swami Yogananda) used to bring him a lemon every day. One day the Master said to him : 'Wherefrom did you get the lemon yesterday ? I could not take it.' Yogin knew that the Master could not eat things brought from low and impure persons. But he had brought the lemon from the same plant from which he had brought the other lemons. Why was it, then, that the Master could not take it ? Yogin felt much perturbed and began to search for the cause. After a careful enquiry he came to know that the orchard from which he used to bring the fruits had changed hands on the day previous to

the incident,—the lease had expired. Yogin received permission to get the fruits from the former lessee. On that particular day, therefore, that permission did not avail, and it was really a theft, though unconscious.

"The Master could see the very mind of the donor in the things given him. He could not take a food which had been in contact with the least sin. How wonderful was his purity ! He could not tolerate the touch and nearness of any impurity. Therefore, if you want to realise him, you must make your heart absolutely pure. All the passions will have to be conquered. Whoever will come here must become ideal. You must remember that you are his children. But do not let this make you proud. Pride must be given up once for all. Maharaj (Swami Brahmananda) says that sometimes he feels as if he is not of this world. The Master also said : 'With whom shall I speak if Naren and Rakhai are not by me ? They are of very pure substance,—they are Narayana Himself ; I feel my lips burning if I talk with worldly persons.'

What purity ! You must be all as pure as he."

At night, after the night service in the shrine, the Swami sat downstairs in the main building. The Disciple asked him : "Kindly tell me how I can see the lotus-feet of the Master."\*

*Swami* : "You have seen the Holy Mother and have touched her sacred feet. Why should you worry?"

*Disciple* : "But, Maharaj, I cannot at all make my mind calm. Please tell me how I can make it calm."

*Swami* : "This is not a sweet in the hand of a child that you will coax it out of him. But don't worry. The Master said : 'I see an ocean in a drop.' If we proceed towards him a single step, he will approach us by a thousand steps. Take refuge in him and repeat his name. By and by you will realise."

*Disciple* : "Maharaj, I am told that without renouncing the world, one cannot earn his grace."

*Swami* : (*sternly*) "What have you, which you can renounce? Remain in whatever condition and wherever He keeps you. You cannot realise Him by doing anything. Through His grace everything is possible. Many practise hard *tapasyā* and yet do not realise His grace. Others very easily get it."

6TH JUNE, 1912.

In the afternoon the Disciple was sitting with S. by the side of the Ganges, when Swami Premananda came there. S. was a sweet man and naturally attracted the love of the Swami. The Swami began to tell him of the love the Master bore towards them. He said : "My mother would not allow me to stay at my village home even during holidays, for fear I would mix with bad boys and spoil myself. But she would cry when I returned to Calcutta. The Master also used to cry when I returned from Dakshineswar to Calcutta. Oh, how can I explain to you how he used to love us ! He used to go to Calcutta in a carriage in order to feed

Purna. He would wait near the school where Purna read, send someone to bring him and then feed him seating him near himself. He would say : 'What is this that has happened to me ? You have not even a mat on which you can welcome me. Yet I am restless to see you !' One day he was found near Balaram Babu's house where I used to stay. Balaram Babu was not at home. The Master did not enter the house for fear of rebuke. He had come to see me ! Afterwards someone called him in. His love knew no bounds and a drop of it could fill us to capacity. Everyone thus thought that he was the most beloved of the Master. He said : 'I can stand everything except egotism.' That is why when he wanted to meet any one, he sent Hriday beforehand, to see if the man was proud. He has left a mould for us. We shall now knead the clay of the mind, eliminating all stones and rubbish from it. And then we shall cast it in the mould ; and a nice form will easily emerge. He came for the whole world." . . .

*Disciple* : "Please tell us of your experience when you first met the Master."

*Swami* : "On the night of my first visit to Dakshineswar, I was sleeping with another devotee. I could not sleep well because of the shoutings of the night watchmen. At last I had a little sleep. But just then the Master came to us, nude, with his cloth rolled under his arm. He woke us up and said : 'Do you know Narendra ? He is a very good boy and lives in Simla. He is well up in music, study and everything. Ask him to see me once. I very much want to see him. Tell him to come tomorrow in a carriage,—the hire shall be paid from here.' So saying he left us and we lay down again. We were about to fall asleep when he came again and said : 'Do tell him to come once. My inside is being clawed like the earth being clawed by a cat. Ask him to

\* The disciple looked upon Sri Ramakrishna as identical with God.



come to-morrow itself. Will you?' When he went away, I thought within myself: 'How deeply he loves him! And the boy does not come to see him! How cruel and wicked of him!' Very soon the Master came again and began to entreat us to tell Narendra to come and praised him highly. Thus the whole night passed.

"Another night I was sleeping in the Master's room. At dead of night I woke up and found the Master going from one end of his room to the other, saying: 'Mother, I do not want this. Do not bring me honour from men. Don't, Mother, don't. I spit on it.' He said this and ran about madlike in the room. I was filled with great wonder. I thought: 'How strange! People are so anxious for honour, and he is entreating the Mother not to give it to him! Why is this happening before me? Is it for my personal edification?'"

29TH OCTOBER, 1912.

A young man who had lately entered the Order was finding it inconvenient to continue his *Sādhana* at the Belur Math on account of its being crowded. He wanted to go to Benares and had gone to Calcutta to beg his train-fare. Swami Premananda did not like this. When the new monk returned from Calcutta, the Swami said to him:

"Are you not ashamed to beg—you a young man? You are a *Sādhu*,—walk all the way to Benares. You think you will go comfortably to Benares and repeat the Lord's name a few times and the Lord will hasten to you? God cannot be realised so easily. 'O my mind, dost thou think thou wilt attain the Divine Mother with thy hypocritical love? She is not a sweet in the hand of a child that thou wilt coax it out of him!' Boys have now a fancy to give up work, as if they have all become Sukadeva. This is the result of reading *Kathāmṛita* (*Gospel of Sri Rama-krishna* by M.). M.'s books record the

conversations of a few days only. 'Call on the Lord in solitude!' That is very well. But who weeps for Him? Who can weep for Him? *Sattva* and *tamas* both look alike. *Tamas* begets sleep, laziness and aversion for work. Swamiji (Swami Vivekananda) said: 'The country is immersed in *tamas*. Like a delirious patient, it is thinking that it is all right and does not want to take any medicine. I have found the remedy. It is now necessary to apply it. Poison is the remedy for delirium, *rajas* is the cure for *tamas*. We must bring *rajas* into the country in order to free it from *tamas*.' *Vairāgya* (dispassion) and *tamas* are quite different things.

"Go and study. We shall bear your expenses. . . . You must have the knowledge of the *Śāstras*, if you want to realise God. Though the Master did not know how to read and write, yet he heard many books read to him. And he remembered everything. At the Cossipore Garden, Sashi Maharaj was once reading to him the *Adhyātma Rāmāyanam* in the original Sanskrit. Swamiji asked him: 'Sir, you do not know reading and writing. Do you understand anything of this Sanskrit reading?' The Master replied: 'Though I have not read myself, I have heard many things. And I know the meaning of every word.' Everything about him was unique. One day Dr. Mahendra Sarkar came to the Master at Shyampukur at about 10 in the morning and left at about 3 or 4 in the afternoon. On seeing this Mani Mallik said: 'Sir, one day there was music at Kristodas Pal's. All the big people of Calcutta came to the party. Dr. Sarkar also came but rose to leave after some five minutes. On being requested to stay a little longer, he said: "No, I cannot, I have much work to do, I cannot stay more." That same Mahendra Sarkar spent to-day five or six hours apparently for nothing!—This is certainly strange!'"

## ART AND LIFE

By ROMAIN ROLLAND

Tolstoy's letter to me on Art dates back to 1887,—a time when he had not yet written any of his large works on Art or rather against Art which he considered in its sum total as a vast system of corruption, a cult of pleasure, an interested superstition of the European *élite* in their selfish enjoyment.

But though in 1887 neither the *Sonata à Kreutzer*, nor *What is Art?* had appeared, Tolstoy's strong aversion to modern art had not any the less penetrated all through his writings.

I deeply loved—as I have never ceased to love—Tolstoy. For two or three years, I was living in the atmosphere of his thought; I was certainly more familiar with his works: *War and Peace*, *Anna Karenina* and *The Death of Ivan Iliitch*, than with any of the great French works. The goodness, the intelligence and the absolute sincerity of this great man made him for me the surest guide amidst the moral chaos of our time.

But, on the other hand, I passionately loved the fine arts; from my childhood onwards, I was fed on the arts and particularly on music; I never should have been able to dispense with it; I may say that music appeared to my life as indispensable as bread. Thus, I was greatly agitated when I read the violent invectives delivered against the immorality of art by the man whom I had come to respect and believe.

I felt strongly, nevertheless, that nothing was more trustworthily than the influence emanating from a great artist. From a symphony of Beethoven or a picture of Rembrandt, we draw not only the effacement of egoism but also the force of intelligence and goodness gushing forth from these great hearts.

Tolstoy spoke of the corruption of art which depraves and isolates men. Where indeed had I felt better invigorated and better experienced brotherliness with men, than in the common emotions of an "Œdipus-King" or of the "Symphony avec Chœurs"? But I distrusted myself, and I felt a great anguish when I thought that I was perhaps wasting my life when my desire was to make it useful to others.

I wrote to Tolstoy. He replied to me on the 4th October, 1887. His letter needs no commentary. It reflects the tranquil and limpid light of his soul which is pervaded by reason and charity. It is written with the apostolic simplicity of the artist, careless of style, solely concerned with making himself understood, never fearing to reiterate his thought till it is well rooted in the mind. We hear his familiar utterance: he does not write, he holds converse.

I am only desirous of saying how much to-day—much more than at the time when I received the letter—I feel myself in complete agreement with his thought. If I regret that Tolstoy is often mistaken in his appreciation of this or that great man, like Beethoven or Wagner, that he was wrong in judging them without understanding them (or at least without understanding them sufficiently),—if I regret also that he has judged French art after a handful of ridiculous decadents (with almost very rare exceptions), to be accounted for, be it added, by the fact that he felt bored by their pretentious poems and unwholesome journals, yet I find his general judgment on art absolutely true.

Yes, *the products of true science and true art are the products of sacrifice and not of material advantages.* And

it is not only in the interests of ethics but in the interests of art itself that the latter should not remain any longer the preserve of any privileged social caste. Artist as I am, I shall be the first to invoke with my prayers the time when art will have gone back to the masses, stripped of its privileges, allowances, decorations and official glory. I demand it in the name of the dignity of art, which has been soiled by thousands of parasites who live disgracefully at its expense. Art should not be a career but should be a vocation.

*The vocation could be known and proved only by the sacrifice which the savant and the artist make of his repose and his comfort, in order to pursue his vocation.* Now in the present civilization, the truly great artists alone make real sacrifices ; they are the only ones who knock against rude obstacles, because they alone refuse to sell their thought and to debase themselves for the pleasure of a corrupt clientele which remunerates its purveyors of intellectual debauchery. By suppressing the privileges of art and by increasing the difficulties of its accessibility, there is no need, therefore, to fear that the true artists will be put to greater suffering ; we shall only be removing the multitude of *faineants* who make themselves intellectuals for keeping aloof from the people and for avoiding more tiresome labour

The world has no need of the ten thousand works of art (or those claimed as such) of the Paris salons, its hundreds of plays and thousands of novels. It has need of three or four geniuses in the course of centuries, and of a people imbued with reason, goodness and the sense of the beautiful, and trained to have a healthy heart, healthy intellect and healthy observation, able to see, feel and understand all that there is of the beautiful and the good in the world, and to strive for the embellishment of the life thereof.

It would not be displeasing to me, I confess, if the artists were all forced

to accept the life of the masses and if the sum of all the manual labour necessary for sustaining and supporting the social edifice, were to be divided among all men without exception. Divided amongst all, it would not be so cramping as to prevent true artists from pursuing their vocation by superaddition ; but it would be sufficient to remove from all false artists the desire to draw on their leisure for abandoning themselves to an intellectual occupation. And how much would art gain in health thereby !

Goethe has said somewhere : *By constantly writing or reading books, one becomes a book oneself.* The artificial, morbid and emaciated character of our present-day art is due to the fact that it has ceased to strike roots in the life of the earth ; it is no more the work of living men, but of human phantoms, of shadowy beings and of maggots nourished on words, portrait-tints, sounds of musical instruments and extracts of sensations. How many true artists have been obliged to live on a different intellectual profession, just for the sake of avoiding the sale of their art ! And how much more embarrassing is this intellectual profession for the creative imagination, than manual labour which tires out the body but leaves the mind all the more free !

But will not the beauty of artistic work suffer thereby ? Is not art exclusive ? Does it not claim the devotion of the artist during every minute of his life ? But let me put this question to every sincere artist : "Who produces more, he who is free all the day, or he who is free for only two hours every day ?" Constraint is not without use to the spirit. Overmuch of liberty produces but poor inspiration ; it leads thought to apathy and indifference. Man has need of stimulants. If his life were not so short, he would not be in a hurry to live so intensively. If he finds himself hedged in within the narrow limit of a few hours, he will work with all the greater

passion. Genius desires obstacles, and obstacles make genius. As for talent, we have only too much of it. Our civilization reeks of talents which, moreover, are perfectly useless and even positively pernicious. If the majority of these "talented" persons were to disappear, and if we had fewer painters, musicians, writers, critics, pianists, strolling mountebanks and journalists, it would not be an evil, but a source of very great happiness. And even if art were to suffer thereby in accuracy, style and technical perfection, I would feel no concern, provided art gained in energy and health. There

are days when I feel no indignation over the burning of the library of Alexandria. Of what use to us is the dead past which overbears us, and of what avail is the cumbrous structure of sciences, arts and civilizations lumbered on to life? Who shall free us from them?

*The foremost science in the world is the science of living in such wise as to produce the minimum evil and the maximum good possible. The foremost art in the world is the art of knowing how to avoid evil and to produce good with the least effort possible.\**

## A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF THE PRESENT STATE OF SCIENCE AND PHILOSOPHY

WITH PASSING REFERENCES TO SANKHYA  
AND VEDANTA

By KAMAKHYA NATH MITRA, M.A.

Just seven months after the publication of my article entitled "Evolution with special reference to the Living and Non-Living from the Standpoint of Maya-vada" in *The Calcutta Review* of June, 1928, I read with much pleasure the confirmation of my criticism of the theory of Sir J. C. Bose in the columns of *The Times Literary Supplement*, January 24, 1929. Says the Reviewer: "Sir Jagadis, notwithstanding the refinement of his methods and apparatus, is an almost exaggerated example of the type so resolute in seeking resemblances that it tends to neglect even fundamental differences. Many years ago he made remarkable investigations into the properties of metallic springs. He found that in certain circumstances they showed a decreasing reaction to compression, but that after a period of rest they might "recover." Here there was a rough analogy with the results of the electrical stimulation of muscle and nerve, and with an almost poetic license

he applied the word "fatigue" to the metallic phenomena. As he well knew, the similarity was of the most superficial kind and the generalisation suggested by the application of a word with organic connotations to another set of phenomena was misleading. More recently and by profounder and longer investigations he has worked at the physiology of plants, in particular their reactions to electrical and other stimulations. It is common knowledge that the living substance of animals and plants is composed of "protoplasm" and that protoplasm, wherever it is found, has sufficient common properties to justify a common name. But it is not the name of a single substance, like mercury or sodium chloride or benzenhexa-carboxylic acid. It is a group name, covering a multitude of differences in composition and structure. The tissues of animals and plants differ not only in the composition and structure of the protoplasm of their cells, but still more

\* Translated from the original French by L. V. Ramaswami Aiyar, M.A., B.L.

in the fashion in which these cells are arranged to form working groups. The use of common names for the phenomena of animals and plants may mislead rather than supply instances of useful synthesis. Sir Jagadis, for example, knows that when a muscle is said to "contract," the cells do not in fact contract but only change their shape. On the other hand, when as in the sensitive plant the sudden contraction of a group of cells causes the leaf to drop, there is almost certainly a change of size as well as of shape in the individual cells, due to the absorption or discharge of fluid. Still more, when the words 'nerve' or 'nervous systems' are applied to plants, profound differences are obscured and very slight analogies may be taken for much more than they are worth. It is impossible to acquit Sir Jagadis of overstatement; but we must congratulate him on the valuable work he has done."<sup>1</sup>

A very neat estimate this from a specialist's hand. In my article in *The Calcutta Review* I did not say anything about the plants beyond that they are living. I confined myself strictly to the criticism of Sir J. C. Bose's statement that there is no such thing as non-living and that there is no discontinuity. *The Times Literary Supplement* reviewer has supplemented my observations by showing the profound difference between plants and animals and has earned the gratitude of hundreds of thousands by dispelling a staggering confusion of ideas. I am also indebted to the writer of the leading article in *Nature*, January 19, 1929, entitled "What is Life?" for insisting that life is unique. He

says: "Although chemistry and physics have helped greatly in the interpretation and understanding of the mechanisms of living organisms, they have not yet succeeded in explaining life. . . There appears to be no trustworthy evidence that life can arise except from living matter. Science still has far to travel before even the humblest bacillus can be produced at will."<sup>2</sup>

As for the *consciousness of plants* Sir J. C. Bose's own admission is enough. Says Sir J. C. Bose: "It is not true that I urged on the acceptance of the doctrine of consciousness of plants<sup>3</sup> which after all is a matter of sympathy and personal belief."—(*The Statesman* of Calcutta, 9th October, 1928, dâk edition). Note very well that Sir J. C. Bose does *not* claim that he has proved that the plant has mind. It may be a matter of personal belief with him as it is with old Manu but Science has nothing to do with unfounded beliefs. This will be a bitter disappointment, no doubt, to our good friends, the panpsychists in general and Leibnitzians in particular. But fact is fact.

How then does the world stand today? A discontinuous world, or in the words of Vedanta परिच्छिन्न जगत् —deep chasms, unbridgeable gulfs between three sets of phenomena—Non-Living, Living and Conscious, not to speak of many other discontinuities known to the modern physicist. The comfortable philosophy of continuity is doomed. *It is a multiverse—not a universe.* The faint resemblances are negligible not only for all practical purposes but also for the sake of religious life. A Vedantist must distinguish. Otherwise

<sup>1</sup> These views have been since confirmed by *The Scientific American*, May, 1929, in its leading article reviewing Sir J. C. Bose's *Plant Autographs and their Revelations*, and also by the foremost scientific journal, *Nature*, in its issue of May 4, 1929, while reviewing Sir J. C. Bose's *The Motor Mechanism of Plants*.

<sup>2</sup> If this fact or the principle of biogenesis had been known to our Sankara, then he would have been spared the necessity of taking so much trouble to overthrow the Sankhyas, for the Sankhyas start with *achetana pradhâna*. That Sankara did not know this appears from the example of insects springing from the cow-dung given in his interpretation of 2-1-6 of the *Brahma-Sutras*. This explains the contradiction between this illustration and *Brahma-Sutra* 2-4-4.

<sup>3</sup> Life can exist without mind but mind cannot exist without life. (*Chhandogya Upanishad*, 5-1-11).

he is not a Vedantist. It is very easy to speak of "variety in unity" and "unity in variety" but very difficult to prove the truth of the dicta.<sup>1</sup> Where unity is, I shall show in the concluding paragraph. The Vedantist's unity is neither immanent nor transcendent (अव्यक्तव्यक्त).<sup>2</sup> This truth should be very well borne in mind or else our Vedantists will commit the greatest blunder of their life. The Unity of Vedanta should be sharply distinguished from the unity of the so-called Monists and Pantheists<sup>3</sup> of the West. We alone can meet the challenge of New Realism and Pluralism before whose heavy tread the comfortable philosophy of the Pantheists and so-called Monists of Europe and America and their modern Indian imitators shakes in its shoes; for "many realists are prepared cheerfully to renounce the notion that there is a whole of which a coherent account can be given: there may be only an aggregate, the universe being a gigantic box with a number of different contents, and the philosophy of an aggregate will be a catalogue of items rather than a systematic doctrine deducible from one general principle."

Do you speak of Uniformity? Hear what Sir Oliver Lodge says: "The present tendency admittedly is to feel that there is something in the universe of a different order—something not cal-

culable by any of the rules of physical science, that the power of prediction is limited not only by our capacity but by the nature of things and that the uniformity of physical nature can be interfered with by the real agency of self-determination and free-will." (Sir Oliver Lodge's discourse on Modern Scientific Ideas).

Is this not the defeat of Science and triumph of Spirit? Is not the news welcome to the Vedantist?

With the disappearance of uniformity vanishes the Reign of Law. Hear the words of Bertrand Russel: "In the present condition of human knowledge, therefore, either to assert or to deny the universal reign of law is a mark of prejudice; the rational man will regard the question as open." (Introduction to Lange's *History of Materialism*, p. xvi).

Hear also what William James thinks on the subject:

"Scientific laws are not in reality laws at all. A scientific law *prima facie* claims to embrace not only all the phenomena that have occurred in the past, but all the phenomena of the same type which can possibly occur in the future. But since the future is unknown, we cannot tell that a scientific law, however well it has worked in the past, will necessarily hold good in the future: hence the so-called laws of

<sup>1</sup> When Swami Vivekananda speaks of unity in variety he speaks only for बुद्धारोह or facility of understanding.

<sup>2</sup> The term 'immanent' (सर्वगत, अव्यक्तव्यक्त) means the world-soul within. The term 'transcendent' means God without. Both the terms imply 'something else'. If you say both 'immanent' and 'transcendent' (panentheism) then also 'something else' remains. Now, 'something else' and Brahman or the Absolute are contradictory ideas. Vedanta does not recognise the creed of identity in contradiction of Hegelian dialectic nor does it recognise dualism in any form, be it of the East or of the West. All that it says is that such philosophies including the emanistic pantheism of our country, Plotinus and the Sufis may be used by the beginners for the purpose of बुद्धारोह or facility of understanding as ज्ञानशाला शिला (ammonite stone) may be used for worship. Such is the magnanimity of Vedanta. Vedanta has come to help, not to destroy. It understands the weakness of man and also knows his strength. It strikes back only when anybody impertinently ventures to attack its position and then its blow is crushing.

<sup>3</sup> All is not God. "God is not Piccadilly Circus" but God is all in all. Nothing else matters. This is the meaning of सर्वे खल्विदं ब्रह्म। God in the sense of Pure Ideal or निर्गुण ब्रह्म has nothing to do with the world. To the believer in निर्गुण ब्रह्म the world is nothing. It is लुब्ध, that is, contemptible and false. Pantheism is incompatible with morality but a-cosmism is not. Pantheism can but lead to determinism whereas a-cosmism stands for free will, the foundation of morality.

science are properly to be regarded as hypotheses or postulates. *A postulate is a man-made hypothesis* which purports to explain all the facts known at the time. Now all scientific laws are postulates of this kind. . . . No scientific law is either finally or absolutely true: in the words of Sir J. J. Thomson, it 'is a policy, not a creed.' " (Joad's *Introduction to Modern Philosophy*).

The Vedantist fully agrees. It is all *adhyāsa*.

And how about Evolution? Evolution is not only a hypothesis but perhaps the weakest hypothesis possible. Its weakness was known to Darwin himself. Says Darwin: "Our ignorance of the laws of variation is profound. Not in one case out of a hundred can we pretend to assign any reason why this or that part varies more or less from the same part in the parents." (Sir Oliver Lodge's *Modern Problems—Essay on Huxley's Lay Sermons*). Struggle for existence and survival of the fittest tend to clinch and make permanent the variations which otherwise arise, says Sir Oliver Lodge in the same essay to those who imagine that they understand fully the origin of those variations without which natural selection would have nothing to work upon.

Says Frederick Soddy: "There is no direct evidence of the change of one species into another." (*Evolution in the Light of Modern Knowledge*).

Does the idea of Evolution apply to matter?

Hear what the same great authority says on the point:

"The world of Physics and Chemistry is fundamentally the non-living or inanimate external world and the student of it must always be on his guard against anthropomorphic notions and the too literal acceptance of mere analogies or supposed analogies that invade it from the world of life. The living world is dominated by a principle

which finds no counterpart in that of pure physics and chemistry, leading to a gradual and orderly growth and development of the complex from the simple."

Another important point to be noted is that the element of time which is essential to the idea of evolution has been interpreted by relativity physics as "one of four dimensions describing or determining an event, and so if the time determinant for any event has any indefinite range of variation in accordance with the choice of the other determinants, *evolution must be an illusion of a particular observer.*" (Our italics).

The Vedantist quite agrees though from a different standpoint. Time, he holds, is an illusion. In the words of Kant it is "an *a priori* intuition of thought"—subjective and not objective.

Another difficulty of the theory of evolution is its logical difficulty. There is a world of difference between the Evolution of our Sankhyas and the Evolution of the modern world. The modern conception of Evolution is epigenetic. Formerly Evolution meant unrolling, the implication being that that which is evolved must have been involved.<sup>1</sup> In the early part of the eighteenth century there was a great controversy between two schools of anatomists, the "evolutionists" and "epigeneticists". The controversy was ultimately decided in favour of the epigeneticists. The epigeneticists hold that the change that arises is something new altogether. The new feature was never 'enfolded' or 'involved'. It suddenly happens. It may be put in this way: "The oak springs from the acorn but it was not *in* the acorn." This view has been accepted by the latter-day evolutionists. *This evolution is the same thing as our Asat-kārya-vāda and not the Sat-kārya-vāda of the Sankhyas.* From the logical point of view the *Sat-kārya-vāda* of the Sankhyas

<sup>1</sup> When Swami Vivekananda speaks of Evolution and Involution he speaks only for सुधारोप or facility of understanding. This is known in Vedānta as अज्ञातोप and अपवादोप.

is far superior to the *Asat-kārya-vāda* of the modern evolutionists. But the *Sat-kārya-vāda* of the Sankhyas is also open to serious objection. How can *mūlā prakṛiti* which consists of three PARTS *sattwa*, *rajas* and *tamas* (substances—not qualities) and which is *achetana* (inanimate) can change at all to some purpose without the active intervention of an animate principle?<sup>1</sup> How again can cause-and-effect relation be established between things that are *bijātiya* (of a different order)? According to the root-conception of *Sankhya's prakṛiti* there cannot be anything that is *bijātiya*, for the three constituents of *mūla prakṛiti* are its PARTS. That being so, anyone thing ought to be the cause of any other thing. But the Sankhyas say that oil cannot be the *parināma* of sand.<sup>2</sup> "Why not," the critic will ask, "your conception of Nature being what it is?" The Sankhyas admit their inability to answer. They say: "We do not know. We know only from experience that certain antecedents produce certain consequents, but not all." Thus Sankhya *Sat-kārya-vāda* falls to the ground.

This naturally leads to a severe examination of the very idea of cause. The result of the examination is that there is no cause anywhere in Nature. Causality is wholly subjective. It comes under Kant's *a priori* categories. The Vedantist agrees and says it is all *adhyāsa*. *Parināma-vāda* is thus given up by Vedanta and in its place we have got *Vivarta-vāda*. The Vedanta accepts *Sat-kārya-vāda* only provisionally; but even then there is a world of difference between the *Achetana-pradhāna-vāda* of Sankhya and the *Chetana-Brahma-kāraṇa-vāda* of Vedanta. The former is spontaneous evolution, the latter creative evolution, though not exactly

in the Bergsonian sense.<sup>3</sup> The idea of *Chetana-Brahma-kāraṇa-vāda* also cannot stand, for Brahman<sup>4</sup> or the Absolute can have no relation. If it had, it would not be the Absolute. If it had not, there would be two Absolutes which is impossible. Atman is असंबन्ध (unrelated). न तस्य कार्यं करणञ्च विद्यते। Atman has neither effect nor cause. The Vedanta rejects the futile cause-and-effect philosophy in its entirety and explodes the world as a whole. Vedanta is a bomb-shell. It rejects all the cosmological and telcological arguments of popular theology and carries us aloft to the dizzy height of *Ekamevādewitiyam*.

From this point let me return to Evolution. I have shown the sad predicament in which the theory stands to-day. It is a disjointed world—discontinuous or परिच्छिन्न. The gaps and chasms are formidable. Still there are people who would bridge the gulf! They speak of 'emergent evolution'. They would make their evolution jump. Make evolution jump—evolution that cannot even creep! Naming is not explaining. Why does emergent emerge? No answer—only a mocking reply: "Why does winkle wink?"

There are some people who will never be dismayed however wretched their cause. They are obsessed. The apostle of emergent evolution is Prof. Lloyd Morgan and its philosopher and theologian is Prof. Alexander who defines Deity in terms of the principle of emergence! According to him nature rises higher and higher and the ultimate result will be Deity. So spirit comes within time-scheme! But they say, he is a great philosopher!!!

Whether Deity will emerge or Destruction will dance we do not know. According to Dr. Jeans,

<sup>1</sup> The Sankhyas believe in objective Law and Order.

<sup>2</sup> The modern evolutionists will no doubt laugh at this idea of *parināma*. But I put things as they are.

<sup>3</sup> In Vedanta there is no apotheosis of *clán vital*, though *mukhya prāna* is a distinct principle and lasts till *bīḍha muktī*. (See *Chhandogya*).

<sup>4</sup> निर्गुण ब्रह्म is अद्वैतीयमना युक्त; 'living' only in the sense of a 'living ideal.'



It is thus that Dr. Jeans sounds the death-knell of the doctrine of infinite progress to which some evolutionists still cling with limpet-like tenacity. Joad, the Realist, however, does not believe in infinite progress any more than Bertrand Russel. Says Joad: "If then the end of the evolutionary process were identical with the beginning, if unity split itself into diversity merely in order that it might again achieve unity, the universe was either a

Where, then, lies the hope of mankind? Only in Vedanta—Vedanta which preaches the sovereignty of the Self, Vedanta whose ethical ideal of *Moksha* is identical with the ontological truth of *Brahman*;<sup>1</sup> Vedanta which disdains the unholy overture of a compromise between *vidyā* and *avidyā*, *Brahman* and *Jagat*, Reality and Value;<sup>2</sup> Vedanta which views with supreme indifference the petty quarrel between the so-called idealism (rather, mentalism, as Sidgwick has so well said) and realism of the West and which standing like the highest Himalayan peak in the midst of a world, storm-tost and tempest-buffed, proclaims in the voice of thunder: Know the Truth and the Truth shall make you free. HERE AT LAST IS THAT UNITY FOR WHICH THE HUMAN HEART CRAVES.<sup>3</sup> No evolution,<sup>4</sup> resultant, emergent or creative, no grandmother's tale of special creation, no world, no sun, no moon, no universe, no multiverse—Thou Alone Art, Thou the Ideal, the Infinite, the Eternal, the Timeless, the Spaceless, the Causeless, the Effectless, the Birthless, the Deathless—Om Tat Sat Om!

<sup>1</sup> नित्यशुद्धब्रह्मस्वरूपत्वान्मोक्षस्य ।

<sup>2</sup> The great problem of Realists to-day is how to reconcile Reality with Value. The neo-Hegelian Green also regards as unanswerable "every form of the question why the world as a whole should be what it is." (*Prolegomena to Ethics*, p. 97). But not a single modern Western philosopher stands for complete renunciation, whatever his label, idealism or realism. Vedanta says: 'A plague on both your houses!' Schopenhauer, the pessimist, is the only modern Western philosopher who recognises the supremacy of the ascetic ideal and we all know Schopenhauer's great regard for Indian philosophy as contrasted with the supercilious and ignorant contempt of Hegel for all things Eastern. This ideal need not have any terror for anyone. It will but lead to the purification of the world. I have laboured this point in my little brochure entitled *Pessimism and Life's Ideal*, published by the Ramakrishna Math, Madras.

<sup>3</sup> The cardinal mistake of Deussen is the identification of *Atman* with Kant's thing-in-itself which according to Schopenhauer is Will. Kant's thing-in-itself, however, is objective. It is neither the will nor the idea. It is certainly not the Absolute. As far as I know, Swami Vivekananda was the first man to point this out.

<sup>4</sup> *Parindma-vadda* is *tuccha* (false and contemptible), as Sankara has so well said in his interpretation of *Brahma-Sutra*, 2-1-27. It has absolutely no spiritual value.

## BUILDERS OF UNITY\*

BY ROMAIN ROLLAND

### RAM MOHUN ROY

Ram Mohun Roy, an extraordinary man, who ushered in a new era in the spiritual history of the ancient continent, was the first cosmopolitan type in India. During his life of less than sixty years (1774--1833) he assimilated all types of thought from the Himalayan myths of ancient Asia to the scientific reason of modern Europe.

He belonged to a great aristocratic Bengal family, bearing the hereditary title of Roy, and he was brought up at the court of the Great Mogul, where the official language was still Persian. As a child he learnt Arabic in the Patna schools, and read the works of Aristotle and Euclid in that language. Thus besides being an orthodox Brahman by birth he was nurtured in Islamic culture. He did not discover the works of Hindu theology until he began to study Sanskrit between the ages of fourteen and sixteen at Benares. His Hindu biographers maintain that this was his second birth; but it is quite conceivable that he had no need of the Vedanta to imbibe a monotheistic faith. Contact with Islam would have implanted it in him from infancy. Again the science and the practice of Hindu mysticism only reinforced the indelible influence of Sufism, whose burning breath had impregnated his being from his earliest years.<sup>1</sup>

The ardour of his combative genius, mettlesome as a young war horse, made him when he was sixteen take part in a bitter struggle, destined to last as long as life itself, against idolatry. He published a book in Persian with a preface in Arabic, which attacked orthodox Hinduism and led his outraged father to drive him from home. For four years he travelled in the interior of India and Thibet, studying Buddhism without growing to love it, and risking death by raising Lamaist fanaticism against him. At twenty years of age the prodigal son was recalled by his father and returned home. In a vain attempt to attach him to the world he was married, but there was no cage for such a bird.

When he was twenty-four he began to learn English, as well as Hebrew, Greek and Latin. He made the acquaintance of Europeans and learnt their laws and their forms of government. Suddenly casting aside his prejudice against the English, he made common cause with them. In order to further the higher interests of his people he won their confidence and took them as allies. He had discovered that only by depending on Europe could he hope to struggle for the regeneration of India. Once more he began his violent polemics against barbarous customs such

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<sup>1</sup> The intuitive power and mystic enlightenment of this nature have been somewhat obscured by his reputation, especially in the West, as a man of vigorous reasoning power and a social reformer fighting against the mortal and deadly prejudices of his people. But the mystic side of his genius has been brought to the fore again by Dharendraanath Chowdhuri. The freedom of his intellect would not have been so valuable if it had not been based upon devotional elements equally profound and varied. From infancy he appears as giving himself up to certain practices of Yogic meditation, even to Tantric practices which he later repudiated, concentrating for days on the name or on one attribute of God, repeating the word until the Spirit manifested its presence (exercise of Purascharna), taking the vows of Brahmacharya (chastity) and silence, practising the mystic exercises of Sufism, which he found more satisfying than the Bhakti of Bengal, too sentimental for his proud taste. But his firm reason and will never resigned their functions. They governed his emotions.

as *Sati*, the burning of widows.\* This raised a storm of opposition culminating in his definite expulsion from his family in 1799 at the instance of the Brahmans. A few years later even his mother and his wives, his nearest and dearest, refused to live with him. He spent a dozen hard and intrepid years, abandoned by all except one or two Scotch friends. He accepted the post of tax-collector, and gradually rose until he became the ministerial chief of the district.

Then his father died and he was reconciled to his own people, he inherited considerable property, the Emperor of Delhi made him a Rajah, and he possessed a palace and sumptuous gardens at Calcutta. There he lived in the estate of a great lord, giving magnificent receptions in the oriental style with troops of musicians and dancers. His portrait is preserved for us in the Bristol Museum. It reveals a masculine face of great beauty and delicacy with large brown eyes. He is wearing a flat turban like a crown, and a shawl is draped over a robe of Franciscan brown.<sup>1</sup> A prince of the Arabian Nights though he might be, this in no wise interfered with his ardent study of the Hindu Scriptures or his campaigns for restoring the pure spirit of the Vedas. To this end he translated them into Bengali and English and wrote commentaries upon them. He went further. Side by side with the Upanishads and the Sutras, he made a close study of the Christian Testaments. He was, it is said, the first high caste Hindu to study the teachings of Christ. After the Gospels

he published in 1820 a book on the Precepts of Jesus, a Guide to Peace and Happiness. About 1826 he became for some time a member of a Society of Unitarians, founded by one of his European friends, the Protestant minister Adam, who flattered himself secretly that he had converted Roy to Christianity, so that he might become its great apostle to the Indians. But Roy was no more to be chained to orthodox Christianity than to orthodox Hinduism, although he believed that he had discovered its true meaning. He remained an independent theist, essentially a rationalist and moralist. He extracted its ethical system from Christianity, but he rejected the Divinity of Christ, just as he rejected the Hindu Incarnations. He attacked the Trinity no less than polytheism; for he was a passionate Unitarian. Hence both Brahmans and missionaries were united in enmity against him.

But he was not the man to be troubled on that score. As all other churches were closed to him,<sup>2</sup> he opened one for himself and for the free believers of the universe. It was preceded by the founding of the Atmiya Sabha (the Society of Friends) in 1815 for the worship of God, the One and Invisible. In 1827 he had published a pamphlet on the Gayatri, supposed to be the most ancient theistic formula of the Hindus. Eventually in 1828 his chief friends, among whom was Tagore, gathered at his house and founded a Unitarian Association, destined to have a startling subsequent career in India, under the name of the Brahmo Samaj,<sup>3</sup>

\* It is said that in 1811 he was present at the burning of a young sister-in-law, and that the horror of the sacrifice, heightened by the struggles of the victim, upset him completely, so that he had no peace till he had freed the land from such crimes.

<sup>1</sup> He had adopted Mohammedan costume. He tried later in vain to impose it at the meetings of his Brahmo Samaj. In dress he possessed an aesthetic taste and hygienic need for cleanliness and comfort, belonging rather to Islam than to Hinduism.

<sup>2</sup> With the exception of the Unitarian Church of the excellent Adam, which, nevertheless, was not prosperous.

<sup>3</sup> The name of Brahmo Samaj appears for the first time erroneously in the deed of purchase of land whereon the Unitarian temple was built in 1829.

Its first meeting was held on August 25, 1828. Every Saturday from seven till nine recitation of the Vedas, readings from the Upanishads, sermons on Vedic texts, the singing of hymns mostly composed by Roy himself and accompanied musically by a Mohammedan, took place.

(Adi Brahmo Samaj), the House of God. It was dedicated to the "worship and adoration of the Eternal, Unsearchable and Immutable Being, who is the Author and Preserver of the Universe." He was to be worshipped "not under or by any other name, designation or title peculiarly used for, and applied to, any particular Being or Beings by any man or set of men whatever." The church was to be closed to none. Ram Mohun Roy wished that his Brahmo Samaj should be a universal house of prayer, open to all men without distinction of colour, caste, nation or religion. In the deed of gift he laid down that no religion "shall be reviled or slightly or contemptuously spoken of or alluded to." The cult was to encourage "the promotion of the contemplation of the Author and Preserver of the Universe" and "of charity, morality, piety, benevolence, virtue and the strengthening the bonds of union between men of all religious persuasions and creeds."

Roy, then, wished to found a universal religion, and his disciples and admirers voluntarily called it "Universalism". But I cannot accept this term in its full and literal meaning; for Roy excluded from it all forms of polytheism from the highest to the lowest. The man, who wishes to regard without prejudice the religious realities of the present day, must take into account that polytheism, from its highest expression in the Three in One of the Christian Trinity to its most debased, holds sway over two-thirds at least of mankind. Roy called himself more correctly a "Hindu Unitarian", and did not hesitate

to borrow from the two great unitarian religions, Islam and Christianity.<sup>1</sup> But he defended himself strenuously, and his disciples are agreed on that point, against the reproach of "eclecticism". According to him doctrine should rest on original synthetic analysis, sounding the depths of religious experience. It is not then to be confounded with the monism of the Vedanta nor with Christian unitarianism. The theism of Roy claims to rest on two poles, the "absolute" Vedanta and the Encyclopædic thought of the XVIIIth century in Europe—the Formless God and Reason.

It was not easy to define, and it was still less easy to realise after he had gone; for it implied a rare harmony of critical intelligence and faith going as far as the enlightenment of a noble mysticism, consistently controlled and dominated by reason. Royally constituted physically and morally, he was able to attain the heights of contemplation without losing for an instant the balance of his everyday life or interrupting his daily course; he was protected against emotional excess, to which the Bhaktas of Bengal were a prey, and which he avoided disdainfully.<sup>2</sup> It is not until we reach Aurobindo Ghose a century later that we find the same aristocratic freedom of diverse powers linked to the highest type of mind. It was not easily communicable and in fact was impossible to communicate intact. Noble and pure though the successors of Ram Mohun Roy were, they changed his doctrine out of all recognition. Nevertheless the

<sup>1</sup> Ram Mohun Roy's Hindu Unitarianism is nearer to the Bible than the doctrines of his immediate successors at the head of the Brahmo Samaj, especially Devendranath Tagore.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Dhirendranath Chowdhuri: *Ram Mohun Roy, the Devotee* (The Modern Review, October, 1928).

... "the Raja would be frequently found absorbed (in Brahmasamadhi), all his distractions notwithstanding... For the Raja Samadhi is not an abnormal physiological change of the body that can be effected at will, not unconsciousness generated as in sound sleep but the highly spiritual culture of perceiving Brahman in all and the habit of surrendering the self to the higher self. Atmasakshatkar to him was not to deny the existence of the world... but to perceive God in every bit of perception... Ram Mohun was pre-eminently a Sadhaka... A Vedantist in every pulse of his being, Ram Mohun failed not to perceive that the Upanishads were not sufficient to satisfy the Bhakti hankerings of the soul, nor was he able to side with the Bhakti cult of Bengal... But the needs of Bhakti would be met by the Sufis, as he hoped..." [This is not Samadhi, but merely spiritual contemplation.—Ed., P. B.]

Constitution of the Brahmo Samaj—the *Magna Carta Dei*,—which included such part as could be understood and assimilated by his successors, founded a new era in India and Asia, and a century has gone to prove the grandeur of its conception.

Its other practical aspect was emphasised by Roy in his vigorous campaigns for social reform,<sup>1</sup> supported by the English administration, more liberal and more intelligent than that of to-day. His patriotism had nothing parochial about it. He cared for nothing but liberty and civil and religious progress. Far from wishing to expel England from India, he wished her to be established there in such a way that her blood, her gold and her thought should be intermingled with the Indian, rather than as a blood-sucking ghoul, leaving her exhausted. He went so far as to wish his people to adopt English as their universal language, to Westernise India socially, and then to achieve independence and enlighten the rest of Asia. His newspapers were impassioned in the cause of liberty on behalf of all the nations of the world, of Ireland, of Naples crushed under reaction, of revolutionary France in the July Days of 1830. But this loyal partizan of co-operation with England could speak frankly to her, and he did not conceal his intention of breaking with her if his great hopes of her as a leader in the advancement of his people were not realised.

Towards the end of 1830 the Emperor of Delhi sent him as his ambassador to England; for Roy wished to be present at the debate in

the Commons for the renewal of the Charter of the East India Company. He arrived in April, 1831, and was warmly received at Liverpool, at Manchester, at London and at Court. He made some illustrious friends, Bentham among their number, paid a short visit to France, and then died of brain fever at Bristol on September 27, 1833, where he is buried. His epitaph runs:

“A conscientious and steadfast believer in the Unity of Godhead: he consecrated his life with entire devotion to the worship of the Divine Spirit alone” or to use the language of Europe, its meaning being the same, “of Human Unity.”

This man of gigantic personality, whose name to our shame is not inscribed in the Pantheon of Europe as well as of Asia, sank his ploughshare in the soil of India, and sixty years of labour left her transformed. A great writer of Sanskrit, Bengali, Arabic, Persian, and English, the father of modern Bengali prose, the author of celebrated hymns, poems, sermons, philosophic treatises, and political and controversial writings of all kinds, he sowed broadcast his thoughts and his passion. And out of the earth of Bengal has come forth his harvest—a harvest of works and a harvest of men.

#### DEVENDRANATH TAGORE

The poet's grandfather, Dvarakanath Tagore, a friend of Ram Mohun Roy, was the chief supporter of the Brahmo Samaj after the latter's death; the father of Rabindranath, Devendranath Tagore (1817—1905), the second

<sup>1</sup> We cannot attempt to give here a full list of his innumerable reforms or attempted reforms. Let us mention among the chief, Sati (the burning of widows), which he proved to be contrary to the sacred texts and which he persuaded the British Government to forbid in 1829—and his campaign against polygamy—his attempts to secure the re-marriage of widows, intercaste marriage, Indian unity, friendship between Hindus and Mussalmans, Hindu education, which he wished to model on the scientific lines of Europe and for which he wrote in Bengali numerous text books on Geography, Astronomy, Geometry, Grammar, etc., the education of women based on the example of Ancient India, liberty of thought and of the Press, legal reform, political equality, etc.

He founded in 1821 a Bengal Newspaper, the father of the whole native Press of India, a Persian paper and another paper called the *Ved Mandir* for the study of Vedic science. Moreover India owes him her first modern Hindu college and free schools, and ten years after his death the first school for women in Calcutta (1843).

successor of Roy after the interregnum of Ramchandra Vidyavagish, was the man who really organised the Brahmo Samaj. This noble figure, aureoled in history with the name of Saint (Maharshi), bestowed upon him by his people, merits some attempt at a short description.

He had the physical and spiritual beauty, the high spirit, the moral purity, the aristocratic perfection, which he has bequeathed to his children ; moreover he possessed the same deep and warm poetic sensibility.

Born at Calcutta, the eldest son of a rich family, brought up in orthodox traditions, his adolescence was exposed to the seductions of the world and the snares of pleasure, from which he was rescued by the visitation of death to his house. But he was to pass through a long moral crisis before he reached the threshold of religious peace. It is characteristic that his decisive advances were always the result of poetic emotions, roused by the wind that took him on a night of the full moon to the banks of the Ganges, or the name of Hari (Vishnu), sung by a dying person, the words of a boatman during a storm—"Be not afraid ! Forward !", or again the wind blowing a torn page of Sanskrit to his feet whereon were written words from the Upanishads, which seemed to be the voice of God, "Leave all and follow Him ! Enjoy his inexpressible riches. . . ."

In 1839 he founded with his brothers and sisters and several friends a Society for the propagation of the truths in which they believed. Three years later he joined the Brahmo Samaj, and

became its leading spirit. It was he who built up its faith and ritual. He organised its regular worship, founded a school of theology for the training of ministers, preached himself, and wrote in Sanskrit in 1848 the Brahmo Dharma, "a theistic manual of religion and ethics for the edification of the faithful." He himself considered it to be "inspired".<sup>1</sup> The source of his inspiration, of quite a different order from that of Ram Mohun Roy, was almost entirely the Upanishads, but freely interpreted.<sup>2</sup> Devendranath afterwards laid down the four articles of faith of the Brahmo Samaj :

1. In the beginning was nothing. The One Supreme Being alone existed. He created the Universe.

2. He alone is the God of Truth, Infinite Wisdom, Goodness and Power, Eternal and Omnipresent, the One without second.

3. Our salvation depends on belief in Him and in His worship in this world and the next.

4. Belief consists in loving Him and doing His will.

The faith of the Brahmo Samaj then is a faith in a One God, who created the universe out of nothing and who is characterised essentially by the Spirit of Kindness, and whose absolute adoration is necessary for the salvation of man in the next world.

I have no means of judging whether this is as purely Hindu a conception as Devendranath thought it to be. But it is interesting to note that the Tagore family belong to a community of Brahmans, called Pirilis, or chief ministers, a post occupied by its

<sup>1</sup> "It was the Truth of God that penetrated my heart. These living truths have come down into my heart from Him who is the Life and the Light and the Truth." (Devendranath). He dictated the first part in three hours, and the whole of the treatise was produced "in the language of the Upanishads like a river, spiritual truths flowed through my mind by His grace." The danger with this process of inspired legislation, the natural expression of a man with Devendranath's temperament, is that on the one hand his Brahmo Samaj maintained that "Truth is the only eternal and imperishable scripture" and did not recognise any other holy book as scripture, and on the other, Truth rested on the authority of this inner outpouring, which had issued in the last resort from several of the Hindu Scriptures, chosen and commented upon in a preconceived sense.

<sup>2</sup> The attitude of Devendranath to the Holy Books was not always consistent. Between 1844 and 1846 at Benares he seemed to consider that the Vedas were infallible, but later he gave up that idea after 1847, and individual inspiration gained the upper hand.

members under the Mussalman regime. In a sense they were placed outside caste through their relations with the Mahommedans ;<sup>1</sup> it is, however, perhaps not too much to say that the persistent rigour of their theism has been due to this influence. From Dvarakanath to Rabindranath they have been the implacable enemies of all forms of idolatry.<sup>2</sup>

According to K. T. Paul, Devendranath had to wage a prolonged struggle on the one hand against the practices of orthodox Hinduism and on the other against Christian propaganda, which sought to gain a foothold in the Brahmo Samaj. The need for defence led him to surround the citadel with a fortification of firm and right principles as picket posts. The bridge was raised between it and the two extremes of Indian religion—polytheism, which Devendranath strictly prohibited<sup>3</sup> and the absolute monism of Sankara ; for the Brahmo *Burg* was the stronghold of the great Dualism of the One and Personal

God and Human Reason, to whom God had granted the power and the right to interpret the Scriptures. I have already pointed out that in the case of Devendranath, and still more of his successors, this Reason had a tendency to become confused with religious inspiration. About 1860 from the depths of an eighteen months' retreat in the Himalayas near the Simla hills he produced a garland of solitary meditation. These thoughts were later expanded into improvised sermons deeply moving to his Calcutta public. Further he bestowed upon the Brahmo Samaj a new liturgy inspired by the Upanishads and impregnated with an ardent and pure spirituality.

A short time after his return from the Himalayas in 1862 he adopted as his coadjutor Keshab Chunder Sen, a young man of twenty-three, who was destined to surpass him and to provoke a schism, or rather a series of schisms in the Brahmo Samaj.

## PRACTICE OF RELIGION

By ANANDA

### EXTERNAL RENUNCIATION

Is external renunciation also necessary? Is not mental renunciation enough? Our opinion is that internal renunciation is not enough. One reason is obvious. Our external behaviour is the expression of our thoughts and motives. If we renounce internally, it must express itself outwardly also, if we are sincere. He who has no world, no family inside, cannot have them out-

side. He becomes like a dry leaf swept by the wind of God's will. He wanders about unattached to any fixed set of persons and place. He cannot have any home. If we find any difference between the inside and the outside, between thought and behaviour, we must know that there is somewhere a kink in the internal renunciation, re-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Manjula Dave : *The Poetry of Rabindranath Tagore*, 1927.

<sup>2</sup> Over the door of Shantiniketan, the home of the Tagores, an inscription runs : "In this place no image is to be adored." But it goes on to add, "And no man's faith is to be despised."

Islamic influences in the infancy of Ram Mohun Roy as well must always be borne in mind in a consideration of the penetration of the Indian spirit with the current of Monotheism.

<sup>3</sup> To such a degree that at the death of his father in 1846, the eldest son whose business it was to arrange the funeral ceremonies, refused to bow to family tradition because it included idolatrous rites. The scandal was so great that his family and friends broke with him. I must not linger over the years of noble trial which followed. Devendranath devoted himself to the crushing task of paying back his father's creditors in full and of meeting all the engagements made by his prodigality; for he died heavily in debt.

nunciation is not yet complete and sincere.

But this is about ideal renunciation. We admit that there may be persons who are sufficiently unattached in the mind, though they are still in the world. Their number is very small ; and they should be looked upon more as exceptions than the general rule. King Janakas are not plentiful. We should not make this our ideal. For it is extremely difficult to follow and realise this. We shall more often fail than succeed. If we can, we must take to normal and natural renunciation, that is, both internal and external. But if we are so circumstanced that we cannot renounce formally, we must of course try to realise the Janaka-ideal, however difficult it may be, for then there is no other choice.

We shall discuss here only the cases of those who *can* renounce. Is it necessary for them to renounce externally? Has such renunciation any special value? We would request our readers in this connection to remember what we said about the fitness and conditions of external renunciation in our June article. We hope they remember the condition of mind we stated to be favourable to renunciation. If they do, they will at once find out why we are insisting on formal renunciation. We said that there is a state of mind, in which the mind by itself does not hanker for the objects of enjoyment, but that if those objects are contiguous, the mind is disturbed and wishes to grab at them. If we are convinced that our sole aim is to make the mind completely desireless, we should, in that condition of mind, live far off from the objects of desire. We must physically go out of society, family and the company of women and children. After all, villages and towns are pre-eminently places of enjoyment—we use the word in a broad sense. There almost all men and women are after self-gratification, consciously or unconsciously, grossly or finely. Constant contact with them and with the

objects of enjoyment which abound everywhere will unconsciously draw the mind down to the level of self-gratification. The best course for one, intent on spiritual self-realisation, is to retire from the habitations of householders and dwell apart. One must live in the company of those who have already renounced and in association with things and activities which are pre-eminently spiritual. To live in the world and yet to grow in the spirit of renunciation means a tremendous waste of energy and most often failure. You have to fight constantly. The mind *will* be disturbed by low desires if you always come in contact with their objects. And you will have to pull it up again to a safe level. This eternal play will go on,—the sliding down of the mind and drawing it up. The energy that is to be devoted to the realisation of God will thus be spent up in looking after the mind. There would, therefore, be little spiritual progress. It is a nerve-racking business,—this struggle with the mind. Heaven knows the mind is sufficiently intractable even without stimulation from outside. Constant struggle with the mind leads to neurosis ; and this is dangerous. If we are sincere and serious, we must, therefore, retire from the world also externally.

We often meet with serene-minded householders, who appear undisturbed by passions and quite self-poised. Some there are who are really highly developed. But as we said they are exceptional. Most of those who appear peaceful are not really so. Firstly, appearances are often deceptive. Secondly, there is a psychological reason why they appear calm outside. It is that they have a constant subconscious knowledge that the objects of enjoyment are already in their possession. This consciousness of possession naturally keeps the mind calm. It is not that we want to enjoy twenty-four hours. We want to enjoy whenever we wish ; but we do want to *possess* the objects of enjoyment twenty-four hours. Take away from a so-



called calm person the objects of his enjoyment, and you will see he has lost all peace of mind,—his nature has changed. When you renounce, your mind becomes unusually sensitive about enjoyment. Desires appear much stronger and much more hideous than when you were in the world. They appear before you in all their hitherto potential power and ugliness. Then the real fight begins and you have to win the battle. In the world, these subtle forms have scarcely any occasion or opportunity to appear in the conscious mind, for the gross forms already abound there. We often congratulate ourselves on the conquest of desires simply by minimising the gross desires, because we do not know that the subtle desires are lurking like wild animals in the subconscious regions of the mind. External renunciation makes them come up to the surface, and then they can be fought and conquered.

This is not the only reason why we should renounce. There are certain ideals which every man aspiring after God-realisation has to try to follow and realise. For they are the emanations of God Himself. We have to become absolutely unselfish. We must practise and realise universal love. We must be fearless and truthful. These are all concomitants of Divine realisation. We cannot hope to realise God without becoming all these. But can we be truly unselfish being in the world? A householder may make charities. But he must necessarily devote his best energies and resources to the service of his parents, wife, children, relations and friends. Though from the standpoint of the householder such preference is a duty and not reprehensible, from the high standpoint of one who is seeking to realise God, it is far short of duty. One feels that any distinction between one's relatives and other persons is born of ignorance and physical attachment, and contradicts Divine knowledge. One feels an urge to remove this distinction. He who surrenders to this urge, eventually goes out of the world. But most

persons drown the voice of their conscience in their love for their own. They devote the best parts of themselves to their wives and children and relatives, and care little for the suffering millions outside their families. How can even internal renunciation be possible in such a life, not to speak of God-realisation? A householder can never practise universal love. The very mode of his life is a contradiction. To love all, one must serve all equally. A householder, however spiritual, cannot do so.

Spirituality cannot come without a true valuation of things. We confuse values. A seer knows that the world has no value, it is unsubstantial, empty and insignificant. Its grandeur, its societies, its Governments, its powers, all are nothing. We must grow to this consciousness, if we want to be spiritual. That is, we must have a keen sense of freedom. We must never feel that we are under anything or any person. Absolute freedom,—that is the ideal. Can a householder ever feel and realise it? He cannot. The moment you attach any value to things or persons, the moment you want to possess them, that moment you come under the jurisdiction of society, Government, conventions, customs and vulgar criticism. You are no longer free to do what you feel to be right. You have to submit to other powers than your conscience. You see that your thoughts, words and deeds do not jeopardise the interests of family, relations, friends and community. You cannot stand by truth alone. You cannot antagonise society. You may antagonise society, but only when you are confident of the protection of another society. Real freedom, real fearlessness and real truthfulness can never be of one who is clogged by family or earthly possessions. Only a *Sannyāsin* can have them. We do not mean that all *Sannyāsins* are so. But they have the opportunity to be so. The householders have not, even if they want to be so.

These qualities have to be acquired through constant practice by everyone, householder or *Sannyasin*.

And above all, power. One must have tremendous power if one is to conquer the turbulent mind and defeat the inexorable *Mâyâ*. That power can never be acquired by one who has not renounced. Freedom alone gives power. The mind must be absolutely free to be powerful. This freedom is so precious to a spiritual aspirant that when one of his young disciples entered a service, Sri Ramakrishna wept aloud in the bitter agony of his heart, and said that

he would not have been more pained to hear of his death. Indeed a full growth of spiritual life, even the fulness of manhood, is impossible without external renunciation.

We must last of all mention that the true import of renunciation can never be felt till one has actually renounced. No effort of imagination can bring its significance to one who is yet in the world, married or unmarried. A new world opens before one when one crosses over. That world is known only to the man of renunciation.

## DECLINE OF INDIA'S CULTURAL SWARAJ

BY PRAMATHA NATH BOSE, B.Sc. (LONDON).

### I

We saw in the last article, that India maintained her Cultural Swaraj and, on the whole, prospered under it down to the earlier years of British Rule. As has been observed by Mr. E. B. Havell, "in the deeper sense India was never conquered. Islam seized her political capitals, controlled her military forces, and appropriated her revenues, but India retained what she cherished most, her intellectual empire, and her soul was never subdued. Her great University cities lost to a great extent their political influence; some changed their sites as they had often done before; others, like Benares, Kanchi and Nadiya were less populous and wealthy, but remained as the historic seats of Hindu learning."<sup>1</sup>

It would perhaps be no exaggeration to say, that the destiny of India in recent times was decided not so much by the result of the battle between Sirajudowla and Clive in 1757, as by that of the battle between the Orientalists and the Anglicists in 1835. It has loosened the bond of cultural affinity

and amity which was the strongest that had held together the heterogeneous elements of the Indian nation, and has been fruitful of mischief in various other ways. The battle ground was the Committee of Public Instruction. Until 1834, the heroes in the fight were equally balanced, five against five.

The Orientalists argued, that the education grant of 1813 was assigned for "the revival and improvement of literature," which could only mean oriental literature, and for "the encouragement of the learned natives of India; by which oriental scholars alone could have been intended"; that English education meant only a smattering of it, and the question was between "a profound knowledge of Sanskrit and Arabic literature on the one side, and a superficial knowledge of the rudiments of English on the other," that the classical languages were "absolutely necessary for the improvement of the vernacular dialects" and "that the condemnation of the classical languages to oblivion, would consign the dialects to utter helplessness and irretrievable

\* "Aryan Rule in India," p. 408.

barbarism," that "little real progress can be made until the learned classes in India are enlisted in the cause of diffusing sound knowledge," and that "one Pundit or Maulavee, who should add English to Sanskrit or Arabic, who should be led to expose the absurdities and errors of his own system, and advocate the adoption of European knowledge and principles, would work a greater revolution in the minds of his countrymen than would result from their proficiency in English alone;" and "that as we have succeeded the native chiefs who were the natural patrons of Indian learning, we are bound to give that aid to oriental scholars which they would have done had they never been displaced by us."

To these arguments, the Anglicists replied, that the grant of 1813 was not only for "the encouragement and improvement of literature and the encouragement of the learned natives of India," "but also for the introduction and promotion of a knowledge of the sciences," by which European sciences alone could be intended, that the example of the Hindu College showed, that Indians could acquire a command of the English language and a familiarity with its literature and science "to an extent rarely equalled by any schools in Europe;" and "the best test of what they can do is what they have done ; that all that is required is to impregnate the national mind with knowledge, but by adhering to oriental education the national mind would for ages be kept in a state of worse than Egyptian bondage, in order that the vernacular dialects may be improved from congenial, instead of from uncongenial sources" ; that it was quite unnecessary, even if it was practical, to have able Pundits and Maulvis versed in English to propagate a taste for European knowledge, as such taste had been created already, and the people were greedy for English education ; and the English Government were not "bound to perpetuate the system

patronised by their predecessors, merely because it was patronised by them, however little it may have been calculated to promote the welfare of the people."

Though the parties were equally balanced, the Orientalists, in point of distinction, were at first the stronger, including as they did among them such men as Wilson and Shakespeare. But the arrival of Macaulay in 1834 and his able advocacy of the cause of the Anglicists turned the scale in their favour ; and the discussion was at last terminated by his minute in which he thus sums up his arguments :

"I think it clear that we are not fettered by the Act of Parliament of 1813 ; that we are not fettered by any pledge expressed or implied ; that we are free to employ our funds as we choose ; that we ought to employ them in teaching what is best worth knowing ; that English is better worth knowing than Sanskrit or Arabic ; that the natives are desirous to be taught English, and are not desirous to be taught Sanskrit or Arabic ; that neither as the languages of law, nor as the languages of religion, have the Sanskrit and Arabic any peculiar claim to our encouragement ; that it is possible to make natives of this country thoroughly good English scholars, and that to this end our efforts ought to be directed."

"In one point I fully agree with the gentlemen to whose general views I am opposed. I feel with them, that it is impossible for us, with our limited means, to attempt to educate the body of the people. We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern ; a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect. To that class we may leave it to refine the vernacular dialects of the country, to enrich those dialects with terms of science borrowed from the Western nomenclature, and to render them by degrees fit vehicles for convey-

ing knowledge to the great mass of the population."

In March 1835, the following resolution, evidently determined by the minute of Macaulay, was passed by Lord William Bentinck:

"His Lordship is of opinion that the great object of the British Government ought to be the promotion of European literature and science amongst the natives of India, and that all the funds appropriated for the purpose of education would be best employed on English education alone."

It gave immense impetus to English education. Two of the Orientalist members of the Committee of Public Instruction tendered their resignation. New members were elected whose views were more in conformity with those of the Government resolution. The Hindus who had hitherto been unrepresented on the Committee were now allowed a share in their deliberations. The newly organised Committee with Macaulay as their President took very active measures for the spread of English education. Six new schools were established the very year the resolution of Bentinck was passed, and six more were established at the commencement of the next year. A library was attached to each school. Books and scientific apparatus of various kinds were ordered from England. Within three years, between 1835 and 1838, the number of seminaries under the control of the Committee rose from eleven to forty, and the number of pupils from about three thousand and four hundred to six thousand.

## II

That the rapid spread of English education has done some good is unquestionable.

It has relaxed the restraints of authority and of conventionalities sanctioned by immemorial usage. Literary ambition has a freer scope, and has been soaring into regions hitherto unknown

in India. The Indian intellect has ventured out of the well-beaten paths of theology and metaphysics. The medical and mathematical sciences which yielded such notable results to the ancient Hindus are now being cultivated on the improved methods of the West. Biography, novel (in its modern forms), archaeology, and the different branches of natural science are subjects almost entirely new in modern Indian literature. It is true, the emancipated intellect has been producing much that is worthless and even mischievous, and is marked rather by extent of surface than by depth. In these respects, however, modern Indian literature resembles, to a great extent, its prototype, the Western literature. In the social sphere also many evils which had crept into Hindu Society such as *Sati* and polygamy have been removed.

There is a fable that on the birth of the son of a mighty personage, all the fairies were invited to his cradle except one, and they were all very profuse in their gifts. The uninvited fairy came last in great dudgeon. But unable to reverse what her sisters had done already, she mixed a curse with every blessing they had conferred. From my experience of over six decades, I find the moral of this fable illustrated in most, if not all, of our sublunary blessings.

The benefits conferred by English Education are overwhelmingly countered by the evils resulting from the extreme pro-Western bias of the average English-educated Indian or Neo-Indian as he may be conveniently called. He regards the methods and ideals of Western culture to be so superior to those of Indian as to render their propagation to be, on the whole at least, a boon and a blessing, and eagerly pursues the path of Western civilization as the right path of progress and reform. Macaulay had the foresight to predict that English education would train up a "class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in

opinions, in morals, and in intellect." That is exactly what has happened.

It should be observed, that new India is no longer characterised by that attitude of aggressive hostility which it assumed towards old India in the early years of English education. It was not enough for the first generation of English-educated youths, at least in Bengal, to show their liberation from Hindu superstition by taking beef and drinking spirituous liquors, but some of them went so far as to purposely offend their orthodox neighbours by throwing beef-bones into their houses. Happily, new India is now generally free from this pugnacious spirit, and the forces of old India have been gradually increasing in strength. But in this conflict of culture new India is still decidedly the more articulate, if not the stronger factor.

The bias of education, formed at the most impressionable time of life, is always very strong and very difficult to remove. The Neo-Indian can hardly be said to have a mind of his own. It is more or less a shadow, a reflection of the Western mind. I find this passage in a work on Indian economics, by a distinguished Indian author: "The rise to a higher standard of life without which no advance in civilization is possible has begun in India."

This is only an echo of the prevailing Western view, that we are just emerging from a lower to a higher state of civilization under Western tutelage. The Western-educated Indian does not pause to ponder whether this "rise" adds to our social efficiency, whether it does not rather diminish it—materially by attenuating to the vanishing point our meagre margin between sufficiency and privation, and morally by inordinately enhancing the stringency of the struggle for animal existence, and thereby leading to the scramble of individual against individual and of class against class, and the consequent diminution of that spirit of benevolence and of social service which has so long

cemented our society together, and to various other ethical obliquities. It cannot be gainsaid, that a rise to a higher standard of living is the necessary concomitant of advance in civilization. Such a rise took place in the case of the Hindus as they advanced in civilization some two thousand years ago, and until recently they kept to the standard of decency, comfort and luxury which they then attained. The so-called "rise" which is now taking place under the influence of a highly materialistic culture like the modern is only an exchange of the indigenous standard of decency, cleanliness, comfort, and luxury for an exotic one. The exchange, instead of benefiting our community, is, on the whole, doing endless mischief. For instance, in a climate where the minimum of clothing, consistent with the indigenous idea of decency, is conducive to health and comfort, the swathing of the body in a multiplicity of cumbersome apparel from head to foot in accordance with the Western idea of decency, produces discomfort, injures health, and drains the purse without any equivalent advantage.

The typical Neo-Indian has become more or less an automaton, moving, acting, and talking much as the Occidental would make him do. He hesitates to take a single step for which there is no precedent in the West. He attempts nothing which is not likely to meet with Western approbation, and nothing passes with him which has not the "Hallmark" of Western approval. He merely echoes the views and shibboleths of the Westerner and does it with all the zeal of a neophyte. The Occidental—naturally enough from his view-point—regards the sparsely clad Indian of simple habits living in the style of his forefathers as but little removed from a barbaric condition. His Indian disciple, as we have just seen, forthwith pleads vehemently for a "rise in the standard of living" after the Western fashion as essential for the emergence of his compatriots from such

condition, forces up the demand for drapery and all the tawdry paraphernalia of Western civilization hundred-fold, and thus adds fresh links to the ever lengthening chain of India's industrial slavery and swells the volume of an exhausting economic drain. The Occidental, accustomed to a different state of society and but little acquainted with ours, views, as a rule, the restricted freedom of higher class Hindu females, the comparative seclusion in which they live and their untiring, whole-hearted, self-sacrificing devotion to household duties as little better than a state of drudgery and bondage, and unable to reconcile illiteracy with enlightenment, regards them as immersed in darkness. New India at once rings with the cry of the "degraded condition of our womanhood" from end to end; the unregenerate males of old India are reprobated by a hundred tongues and castigated by a thousand pens for perversely keeping their women in a condition of slavery wallowing in the slough of ignorance. That there is room for reform in Hindu Society, as there is in every other society, goes without saying. But the Neo-Indian reformer knows no way of reform except that of Western civilization; and burning with zeal he loudly proclaims the gospel of female emancipation on Western lines and girds up to lift the benighted females by making them race with the males along the paths of University education and Western civilization, little reflecting upon the goal to which they are likely to lead and to which they are already leading in the West.

The Upanishads were for a long time sealed books to the Neo-Indian. But when a Western philosopher (Schopenhauer) declared emphatically, that "in the whole world there is no study so beneficial and so elevating as that of the Upanishads," and that "it had been the solace of his life, and would be the solace of his death," he began to see that there might really be something in

them and to pay them some sort of lip-homage. Vedantism, the most scientific religion which civilized man has risen to as yet, has for good many centuries been, and still is, the dominant creed of the enlightened in old India; but new India knew but little of it until it secured the adherence of Max Müller, Deussen, and other European savants. Even now, the great majority of the Neo-Indians, like the great majority of the Westerners, look upon Vedantism and similar products of ancient Hindu culture much as they look upon Museum specimens of palæontological and archæological curiosities. The Caste System is generally regarded by the Westerner as a "monstrous engine of pride, dissension, and shame," and the Neo-Indian, following his lead, anathematizes it and exclaims from house-tops: "Our character is being unhinged, our divisions and dissensions are being sharpened, our activities for public good are being weakened, our very national existence is being threatened by this demon of caste, which has made, and is making cowards of us."

### III

The Neo-Indian is so fully convinced of the beneficence of the present system of Education on Western lines, and is so enamoured with it, that he constantly urges its extension in the press and on the platform, for males as well as for females, for the upper as well as for the lower classes. He measures the progress of any particular area, or of any particular section of the population, by its progress in literacy on Western methods. The Neo-Indian scholar considers himself so far above the learned of old India, that they evoke in him a complacent feeling of benignant patronage, if not of contemptuous indifference. A discussion at a meeting of the Senate of the Bombay University, held in October, 1913, will illustrate the attitude of new India in this respect. The discussion arose out

of the following letter from the Secretary to the Government of Bombay, Education Department, to the Registrar of the University:

"I am directed to state that at the conference of Orientalists held at Simla in July, 1911, there was a general consensus of opinion that it was necessary while making provision for Oriental study and research on modern critical lines, to maintain side by side with it the ancient and indigenous systems of instruction, since the world of student-ship would, it was thought, suffer irreparable loss if the old type of pandit and maulavi were to die out, and that what was needed to promote this indigenous system was encouragement rather than reform. With this object in view it has been suggested that a Sanskrit school might be established at Poona for the training of pandits. The school should be furnished with a good library to which the collection of manuscripts at the Deccan College might be transferred. The students at the proposed school would be partly pandits engaged in the acquisition of Oriental learning on the traditional lines, and partly graduates interested either in Oriental research or in extending their knowledge of the more recondite branches of Oriental studies. The staff would consist partly of the repositories of the ancient traditional learning and partly of modern Oriental scholars. Provision would also be made for the imparting of an elementary knowledge of the English language to the pandit students, and of the German and French languages, a knowledge of which is necessary for the study of modern methods of criticism."

In connection with this letter an elderly Fellow of the Bombay University, who was on the borderland between old and new India, proposed:

"That Government be informed that the University is prepared to establish a branch of Oriental studies with suitable titles of distinction if arrangements are made for the teaching of this branch

of knowledge generally on the lines indicated in the Government letter."

This proposal met with a storm of opposition which was led by a prominent representative of new India. So far as I can gather, his reasons for opposing it are

First: The traditional mode of learning developed the faculty of "cramming."

Secondly: It was adverse to "liberal education."

"The old traditional learning", said this gentleman, "would not stand the test of modern ideas. They should leave the pandits to take care of themselves. If Government desired to give them encouragement let them do so, but the University should have nothing to do with them. He did not want traditional learning at the expense of liberal culture."

Another Neo-Indian gentleman in seconding the amendment said that

"He was surprised that at that time of the day they should talk of the preservation of the pandits. Considering the harmful mode of their learning it was not advisable for the University to recognise them by instituting degrees. The University should not extend its recognition to any one who had not acquired an insight into what he called the modern outlook of life. The pandits' outlook of life was so narrow, and the traditional school of learning was so harmful and opposed to modern learning, that by encouraging it they would not be encouraging what was termed liberal education."

Poor pandits! The fact that such men as Bhaskaracharya, Ramanuja, Ramananda, Madhavacharya, Chaitanya, Rammohan Roy, Isvar Chandra Vidya-sagar, Bapudeva Sastri, Taracharan Tarkaratna, Sudhakar Divedi, Rakhal Das Nyayaratna and Dayananda Sarasvati have come from their ranks in comparatively recent times—not to speak of the great sages and scientists who flourished during the heyday of our civilization—should have afforded

food for reflection to men who have any pretension to "liberal" education. That there are serious defects in the indigenous system of higher education would be readily admitted by all who know anything about it. But it is not so harmful, nor does it compare so very unfavourably with the system of English education in vogue among us, as to be undeserving of the small measure of encouragement vouchsafed by Government. There is, I think, no less of "cramming" among us than among the pandits. They exercise their memory to be thorough, we do so merely to pass examinations. Thoroughness and profundity are writ large on the brow of the pandits, as superficiality and shallowness on ours. Then, in regard to the matter "crammed," I am not sure that we can reasonably boast of superior discriminative capacity, when we remember that a good portion of our time has been consumed in committing to memory such things as the facts (with dates) of glorified assassins, murderers, freebooters, and swindlers.

A tree is to be judged by its fruit; and I have grave doubts if the fruit of the exotic recently planted is so markedly superior to that of the indigenous plant that we can despise it and leave it to perish. The pandit is the embodiment of a high cultural ideal which actuates but few of us. He is but little influenced by commercial considerations. He not only imparts education without any fee but also feeds his pupils; and though "Brahmacharya" has undergone considerable relaxation of late, the physical and mental discipline they are still subjected to is far more wholesome than what is enforced in our English schools.

Physically, intellectually, and morally the average pandit does not compare at all unfavourably with the average product of English education. I doubt if the pandits as a body are more narrow-minded and illiberal than such sticklers

for "liberal culture" as the Neo-Indian scholars who have arraigned them. Lest I should be charged with bias in favour of the pandits, I shall cite the testimony of some Western scholars:

"The Brahmins who compiled," says H. H. Wilson, "a code of Hindu law, by command of Warren Hastings preface their performance by affirming the equal merit of every form of religious worship. Contrarieties of belief, and diversities of religion, they say, are in fact part of the scheme of Providence; for as a painter gives beauty to a picture by a variety of colours, or as a gardener embellishes his garden with flowers of every hue, so God appointed to every tribe its own religion, that man might glorify him in diverse modes, all having the same end, and being equally acceptable in his sight. To the same effect it is stated by Dr. Mill in his preface to the *Khrista Sangita*, or Sacred History of Christ, in Sanskrit verse, that he had witnessed the eager reception of the work by devotees from every part of India, even in the Temple of Kali, near Calcutta, and that it was read and chanted by them with a full knowledge of its anti-idolatrous tendency."\*

It would be difficult to find such catholicity and philosophic toleration even now in many parts of the civilized West.

Max Müller thus writes about the pandits:

"During the last twenty years, however, I have had some excellent opportunities of watching a number of native scholars under circumstances where it is not difficult to detect a man's true character, I mean in literary work and, more particularly, in literary controversy. I have watched them carrying on such controversies both among themselves and with certain European scholars, and feel bound to say that, with hardly one exception, they have displayed a far greater respect for truth,

\* "Essays and Lectures on the Religion of the Hindus," Vol. II, p. 8.



and a far more manly and generous spirit than we are accustomed to even in Europe and America. They have shown strength, but no rudeness ; nay I know that nothing has surprised them so much as the coarse invective to which certain Sanskrit scholars have condescended, rudeness of speech being, according to their view of human nature, a safe sign not only of bad breeding, but of want of knowledge. When they were wrong, they have readily admitted their mistakes ; when they were right, they have never sneered at their European adversaries. There have been, with few exceptions, no quibbling, no special pleading, no untruthfulness on their part, and certainly none of the low cunning of the scholar who writes down and publishes what he knows perfectly well to be false, and snaps his fingers at those who still value truth and self-respect more highly than victory or applause at any price. Here too, we might possibly gain by the import cargo. Let me add that I have been repeatedly told by English merchants that commercial integrity stands higher in India than in any other country, and that a dishonoured bill is hardly known there.”\*

Mr. Adam gives the following interesting description of the pandits :†

“I saw men not only unpretending, but plain and simple in their manners, and though seldom, if ever, offensively coarse, yet reminding me of the very humblest classes of English and Scottish peasantry ; living constantly half-naked and realising in this respect the descriptions of savage life ; inhabiting huts which, if you connect moral consequences with physical causes, might be supposed to have the effect of stunting the growth of their minds, or in which only the most contracted minds might be supposed to have room to dwell—and yet several of these men are adepts in the subtleties of the profoundest grammar of what is probably the most

philosophical language in existence, not only practically skilled in the niceties of its usage but also in the principles of its structure ; familiar with all the varieties and applications of their national laws and literature and indulging in the abstrusest and most interesting disquisitions in logical and ethical Philosophy. They are, in general, shrewd, discriminating and mild in their demeanour. The modesty of their character does not consist in abjectness to a supposed or official superior, but is equally shown to each other. I have observed some of the worthiest speak with unaffected humility of their own pretensions to learning, with admiration of the learning of a stranger and countryman who was present, with high respect of the learning of a townsman who happened to be absent, and with just praise of the learning of another townsman after he had retired, although in his presence they were silent respecting his attainments.”

The pandits have at least preserved the precious heritage bequeathed by our ancestors. But for them much of it would have been irrecoverably lost. Instead of being grateful to them, to load them with contumely, argues a degree of flippancy and narrow-mindedness which one would be loath to associate was “liberal culture.” Our outlook on life is certainly broader than that of the pandits. But how many of us have either the time or the inclination to inquire whether it is not shallower than of yore ? We have learnt to take a brighter view of mundane life than the pandits, but is not much of the brightness the mere shine of flimsy tinsel ?

#### IV

Education is obviously a means to an end. That end is knowledge. But all knowledge is not desirable, as, for instance, the kind of knowledge which enables one to practise robbery or mur-

\* “India : What can It Teach Us,” Lecture II.

† Quoted in F. W. Thomas’ “History and Prospects of British Education in India,” p. 8.

der more efficiently and more scientifically than he would be able to do without it. From this point of view, the spread of the knowledge of submarines, large, long-range, quick-firing guns, aeroplanes, asphyxiating gases, explosives, &c. is condemnable. Had the Western world been more discriminating and more careful to check the dissemination of such knowledge, it would not have been landed in such a disastrous situation as it is occupying at present. But the Westerners have been under the delusion that the practical applications of physical science to the art of war would make war less frequent and less destructive. The wars of the present century, especially the late World-War, have frustrated this expectation, and will, I hope, serve to disillusion them.

Right knowledge, then, is the end of education. But what is right knowledge? There is a certain amount of conflict of opinion between the Ancients and the Moderns in this respect. With the Hindu sages the goal of knowledge was ethical and spiritual advancement. Every system of Hindu philosophy, whether theistic, pantheistic, monistic or even agnostic, recognises the salvation of the soul as its end. Its object is to secure the good or well-being of humanity by the development of the inner life for which more or less of abstention from sensual gratification, a life of more or less of ascetic simplicity is requisite. In this respect Hindu culture is at one with the Roman or Greek culture. No Hindu teacher could have exhorted his disciples to be independent of external circumstances and bodily conditions more forcibly or more earnestly than did the Socratic or the Stoic sage. Even Epicurus, with whom pleasure was the sole ultimate good, maintained the immense superiority of the pleasures of the mind over those of the body, and the Epicurean sage no less than the Vedantic sought for happiness and tranquillity of soul from within rather than from without.

The ancient philosopher, Eastern as well as Western, strove to keep the struggle for animal existence to the lowest point of animal necessity in order that one might be free, so far as possible, from the moral corruption incidental to it, and might, if he chose, devote more time and energy to the higher and more arduous struggle for spiritual development than he would otherwise be able to do.

The basic principle of modern culture, on the other hand, is to secure the well-being of man by perpetually provoking and feeding his sensual desires, by eternally inventing means and appliances for gratifying them. The goal of invention to-day becomes its starting point to-morrow. One effect of this inventional activity has been to commercialise education, especially scientific education—to efface to a very large extent, if not entirely, the old line of demarcation between education for culture and education for livelihood. The technological, that is to say, the vocational side of a modern University overshadows the cultural; and in countries like Germany, which have taken the lead in modern progress, there have sprung up Universities solely for the purpose of technical education. The greatest majority of the scientific men of the present day are only glorified mechanics and tradesmen. The cultured Ancients, whether in the East or in the West, looked upon trade and industry, in fact all money-making occupations as fit pursuits of people in lower planes. Plato, for instance, valued Mathematics only because “it habituates the mind to the contemplation of pure truth and raises us above the material universe.” He remonstrated with his friend Archytas who had invented powerful machines on mathematical principles, and declared “this was to degrade a noble intellectual exercise into a low craft fit only for carpenters and wheelwrights.” Archimedes was half ashamed of his inventions which were the wonder of his age.

Among the Hindus, Manu condemned the institution of huge machinery as a sin. Visvakarma, the divine patron of crafts in India, receives worship only from artisans, and he was in no way superior to Maya, the architect of the Danavas. Sukracharya, the greatest Indian inventor of ancient times of whom we have any traditions, was a professor of the Daityas.

There is no doubt that the domain of knowledge has been expanding widely and rapidly in the West, but there is equally no doubt that the domain of wisdom has been contracting. Is militarism increasing? The Westerners set up the Hague Tribunal and League of Nations, while they go on increasing their armaments and fiendish means of destruction, feeding greed and sowing discord, and do not make any earnest attempt to curb their grabbing spirit or to promote the spirit of benevolence. Their action is like that of piling faggots on a fire while plying the fire engine, of sprinkling water at the top of a plant while cutting away at its root.

The vast overwhelming mass of Western literature bearing upon an infinity of topics constitutes a gigantic labyrinth in the intricate and bewildering mazes of which one is apt to get lost, without any light that would point out a rational goal of his life and help him to attain it. The inventive miracles of the West, however, have enabled it to build up its colossal fabric

of industrial civilization and to exploit the weaker peoples of the globe. From the purely material standpoint, therefore, it has gained at least temporarily. India, however, has not only not gained but lost heavily. I have elsewhere shown how the spread of Western civilization there has led to physical and moral degeneration.\* No doubt Government has to a great extent, consciously or unconsciously weakened or destroyed the bulwarks of our Cultural Swaraj. But the Westerners have not yet attained the highest stage of civilization in which selflessness prevails over selfishness. And their prosperity, nay, in several cases, even their very existence, under existing conditions, depends upon the exploitation of the weaker peoples of the globe. But we are perhaps more to blame for having aided and abetted an alien Government with interests and ideals different from and often diametrically opposed to ours.

Indeed, it would, perhaps, be no exaggeration to say, that we have acted like the simpleton of the Sanskrit sloka—

*Karasthamudakam tyaktvā  
ghanasthamabhibānchhati,  
Siddhamannam parityajya  
bhikṣhāmatati durmati.*

(The fool neglecting the water at hand aspires to that from the clouds, and despising the ready meal at home goes begging abroad.)

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\* "Survival of Hindu Civilization," Part 2; "Physical Degeneration, its Causes and Remedies;" "Some Present-day Superstitions."

# ASHTAVAKRA SAMHITA

By SWAMI NITYASWARUPANANDA

## CHAPTER V

### FOUR WAYS TO SELF-REALISATION

#### अष्टावक्र उवाच ।

न ते सङ्गोऽस्ति केनापि किं शुद्धस्त्यकुमिच्छसि ।

सङ्घातविलयं कुर्वन्नेवमेव लयं व्रज ॥ १ ॥

अष्टावक्रः Ashtavakra उवाच said :

ते Your केन with anything अपि verily सङ्गः contact न not अस्ति is (अतः so) शुद्धः pure (तं you) किं what त्यक्तं to renounce इच्छसि wish सङ्घातविलयं dissolution of the complex कुर्वन् effecting एवं thus एवं surely लयं Dissolution व्रज attain.

Ashtavakra said :

1. You have no contact with anything whatsoever. Therefore, pure as you are, what<sup>1</sup> do you want to renounce? Destroy the complex<sup>2</sup> and even thus<sup>3</sup> enter into (the state of) Dissolution.<sup>4</sup>

[This chapter describes four different ways of the realisation of the absolute state. The first verse speaks of being *Asanga*, unattached; the second of looking upon the universe as the same reality as the Self — there is only one Atman; the third of considering the phenomenal universe as illusory; and the fourth of remaining unaffected by the phenomena of the universe, internal and external. Any of these four outlooks will lead to the realisation of the Absolute.

1 *What etc.*—We renounce what we are attached to. But the pure Self is unattached.

2 *Complex*—the aggregate of the body, mind, intellect, the senses, etc. We are at present identifying the Self with all these and thus making them exist. This identification prevents us from going into Samadhi. The moment we shall destroy this identification, we shall merge in the Absolute.

3 *Thus*—by destroying the complex.

4 *Dissolution*—The state in which no phenomena exist, — the Absolute.]

उदेति भवतो विभ्वं वारिधेरिव बुद्बुदः ।

इति ज्ञात्वैकमात्मानमेवमेव लयं व्रज ॥ २ ॥

वारिधेः From the sea बुद्बुदः bubbles इव like भवतः from you विभ्वं universe उदेति rises इति thus ज्ञात्वा Self एकं one ज्ञात्वा knowing एवं in this way एवं verily लयं Dissolution व्रज attain.

2. The universe rises from you like<sup>1</sup> bubbles rising from the sea. Thus<sup>2</sup> know the Atman to be one and enter even thus into (the state of) Dissolution.

1 *Like etc.*—thus showing that the reality of the phenomenal world is no other than the Self itself.

2 *Thus*—The knowledge that Atman alone exists negates the phenomenal world and thus the Absolute is realised.]

प्रत्यक्षमप्यवस्तुत्वाद्भिभ्वं नास्त्यमले त्वयि ।

रज्जुसर्प इव व्यक्तमेवमेव लयं व्रज ॥ ३ ॥

रज्जुसर्पः The snake in the rope इव like व्यक्तं manifested विभ्वं universe प्रत्यक्षं visible अपि though अवस्तुतात् on account of being unsubstantial अमले pure त्वयि in you न not अस्ति is एवं thus एवं verily लयं Dissolution व्रज attain.

3. The universe, being manifested<sup>1</sup> like the snake in the rope, does not exist in you who are pure,<sup>2</sup> even though it is present to the senses ; because it is unreal. Thus<sup>3</sup> verily do you enter into (the state of) Dissolution.

[<sup>1</sup> *Manifested etc.*—This classical example of the snake in the rope indicates that the universe which has been superimposed on the Self is really non-existent.

<sup>2</sup> *Pure*—The illusion of the world can never affect the Self.

<sup>3</sup> *Thus*—having known the universe to be non-existent. Then the consciousness of the Atman alone remains.]

समदुःखसुखः पूर्ण आशानेराश्ययोः समः ।

समजीवितमृत्युः सन्नेवमेव लयं व्रज ॥ ४ ॥

पूर्णः Perfect समदुःखसुखः to whom misery and happiness are the same आशानेराश्ययोः in hope and despair समः same समजीवितमृत्युः to whom life and death are the same सन् being (त्वं you) एव thus एव verily लयं Dissolution व्रज attain.

4. You are perfect and equanimous in misery and happiness, hope and despair, and life and death. Therefore even thus do you attain (the state of) Dissolution.

[We are affected by joy and sorrow, hope and despair, and life and death as long as we consider ourselves as imperfect, as other than the Self. The moment we know ourselves as the Atman which alone is perfect, we go beyond all pairs of opposites and attain Samadhi.]

## CHAPTER VI

### THE HIGHER KNOWLEDGE

अष्टावक्र उवाच ।

आकाशवदनन्तोऽहं घटवत् प्राकृतं जगत् ।

इति ज्ञानं तथैतस्य न त्यागो न ग्रहो लयः ॥ १ ॥

अहं I आकाशवत् like space अनन्तः limitless प्राकृतं phenomenal जगत् world घटवत् like a jar इति this ज्ञानं Knowledge (भवति is) तथा so एतस्य of this त्यागः relinquishment न not अहः acceptance न not लयः dissolution (न not च and भवति is).

1. Boundless as space am I. The phenomenal<sup>1</sup> world is like<sup>2</sup> a jar. This<sup>3</sup> is Knowledge. So<sup>4</sup> it<sup>5</sup> has neither to be renounced nor accepted<sup>6</sup> nor destroyed.<sup>7</sup>

[<sup>1</sup> *Phenomenal*—*Prākṛita*=evolved out of *Prakṛiti*.

<sup>2</sup> *Like etc.*—Just as a jar contains a space which is the same as the infinite space, so the universe with its manifold name and form, contains a reality which is identical with the Atman.

<sup>3</sup> *This etc.*—The sage Ashtavakra speaks in this chapter of a higher outlook. In the previous chapter he spoke of *Laya*, of the need and methods of going beyond the relative consciousness into the Absolute. But even this attempt at *Laya* rises out of a vestige of ignorance ; for the pure Self was never at any time bound. Here he speaks of that higher outlook to which the universe and its consciousness is no longer a bondage and does not, therefore, require to be transcended. That is to say, the universe, to this view, reveals itself as being of the same substance as the Atman itself. All is now the Self. As Sri Ramakrishna said, till we have reached the roof, we negate the stairs as something other than the roof, but when we have reached the roof, we find that the stairs and the roof are of the same material.

4 So—When this Knowledge has been attained, there is then only the one Self; the question of renouncing, accepting or destroying anything does not arise.

6 It—the phenomenal world.

6 Accepted—We then do not feel attached to the world.

7 Destroyed—we then do not require to negate it as something other than Atman.]

महोदधिर्वाहं स प्रपञ्चो वीचिसन्निभः ।

इति ज्ञानं तथैतस्य न त्यागो न ग्रहो लयः ॥ २ ॥

सः That अहं I महोदधिः ocean इव like (चञ्चि am) प्रपञ्चः phenomenal universe वीचिसन्निभः like the wave (भवति is) इति etc. *as before*.

2. That I am like<sup>1</sup> the ocean and the phenomenal universe is like the wave. This is Knowledge. So it has neither to be renounced nor accepted nor destroyed.

[<sup>1</sup> Like etc.—This example makes clearer the oneness of the Self and the universe,—both same substance like ocean and its wave.]

अहं स शुक्तिसङ्काशो रूप्यवद्विभक्तलपना ।

इति ज्ञानं तथैतस्य न त्यागो न ग्रहो लयः ॥ ३ ॥

सः That अहं I शुक्तिसङ्काशः like pearl-oyster (चञ्चि am) विभक्तलपना the world-projection रूप्यवत् like silver (भवति is) इति etc. *as before*.

3. That I am like the pearl-oyster; and the world-projection is like<sup>1</sup> silver. This is Knowledge. So it has neither to be renounced nor accepted nor destroyed.

[<sup>1</sup> Like etc.—The reality behind the silver-illusion is the pearl-oyster. Even so the reality of the universe is the Self itself.]

अहं वा सर्वभूतेषु सर्वभूतान्यथो मयि ।

इति ज्ञानं तथैतस्य न त्यागो न ग्रहो लयः ॥ ४ ॥

अहं I वा indeed सर्वभूतेषु in all beings (चञ्चि am) अथो and सर्वभूतानि all beings मयि in me (भवति are) इति etc. *as before*.

4. I<sup>1</sup> am indeed in all beings and all<sup>2</sup> beings are in me. This is Knowledge. So it has neither to be renounced nor accepted nor destroyed.

[<sup>1</sup> I etc.—I am the inner substance of all beings.

<sup>2</sup> All etc.—I am the substratum of the universe.

This verse also indicates that the reality of the Self and of the phenomena are not different. The Atman is both the contained and the container of the universe.]

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### In This Number

As will be seen from the *Unpublished Letters of Swami Vivekananda* printed this month, the Swami was eager to establish a monastic centre in Kashmir, and to that end, a plot of land was also chosen. H. H. the Maharajah was only too eager for this; but the proposal was vetoed on the list of Agenda for Council, in the following autumn,

by the English Resident, Sir Adelbert Talbot. . . . . Sri Ramakrishna on the *Outlook of Renunciation* is translated from the diary of M., a disciple of the Master, as published by him in Bengali. . . . . The opinion of ROMAIN ROLLAND (himself an artist of the highest rank), as expressed in his article, *Art and Life*, deserves our most careful and respectful attention. To

him Art is not a pastime, but a "vocation," to be nourished by his heart's blood. . . . *A Bird's-Eye View of the Present State of Science and Philosophy with Passing References to Sankhya and Vedanta* by KAMAKHYA NATH MITRA, M.A., who is the Principal of the Rajendra College, Faridpur, Bengal, is a challenging article. His estimate of Sir J. C. Bose's scientific discoveries should be carefully considered. Sir Jagadish himself should not be expected to draw out logically the philosophical implications of his researches. This task must be left to philosophers themselves. But first perhaps it is necessary to decide whether we are living in a universe or multiverse . . . . *Builders of Unity* by ROMAIN ROLLAND, translated from the original French, is extracted from his *Life of Sri Ramakrishna* still unpublished. We hope to publish a few more extracts from the same source in our next issues.

### Quacks

The finer a thing, the greater is the chance of confusion about it. Spirituality is, therefore, very often misunderstood. All sorts of things pass under that name. The reason of the abuse of religion is at least threefold. First, scarcely any religion except Hinduism has as yet conceived spiritual phenomena rationally and scientifically. Transcendental experiences have come to the votaries of all great religions. But the true co-ordination of those experiences with the other experiences of life and reality has not been made by the non-Hindu religions. These experiences have been often conceived by them as either miracles or grace of God, mysterious and inexplicable, as mere revelations. Naturally faith has been the only attitude possible towards them. Understanding has been lacking. A theoretical knowledge of the nature and workings of the mind, subconscious, conscious and superconscious, and of the nature and ways of the spirit makes one less liable to error ; and

there is less superstition and spiritual confusion. Secondly, theoretical knowledge is not enough in itself. When we come face to face with the psychical and psychological phenomena, we often fail to properly estimate them in spite of theoretical understanding, because of inexperience. These new experiences are so unlike the accustomed ones that their proper evaluation becomes extremely difficult. We easily make blunders. Thirdly, there is always the tendency in us to press our higher knowledge to the service of our base desires. We want to exploit spiritual knowledge and power for our earthly benefit.

This last reason, in our opinion, is the greatest obstacle in the way of the West becoming truly spiritual. The West is too much *râjasika*, outward bound. Whatever comes in its way, it seeks to apply in glorifying its normal earthly self. Science has already suffered in this way. Science has almost become synonymous with the quest for more and more worldly riches, powers and comforts. Science is primarily a search for truth and knowledge and is consequently holy. But it is now utterly desecrated by being forced to serve the earthly and the gross. The science of mind has succumbed to the same fate. The higher is being constantly dragged to the level of the lower to satisfy the greed of the worldly-minded. The Indian spiritual activities in the West have to suffer greatly from this. It is a great shame that even Indians do not sometimes hesitate to take advantage of the situation. There are Indians in the West, who have made the preaching of pseudo-religion a means of earning wealth. There are imitation Swamis and Avatars parading their wisdom in the West making extravagant claims calculated to ensnare the greedy. Not merely Indians, but there are many more Western men and women who have set themselves up as spiritual teachers, pandering to the credulities of

the people. And false occult books are being written by scores and hundreds in order to catch the unwary.

The present is pre-eminently the age of psychological investigation. There is no doubt that Indian knowledge has been a great stimulus in this respect. That religion is a matter of psychology in the last analysis, and not of theology, has been demonstrated specially by Indian religion. The idea has caught on. But the great interest in psychology in the West is not all due to India. The Western psychologists also have of late contributed a good deal. The result, however, has not been happy. Confusion has become worse confounded. An American writer has recently given a vivid picture of what psychology-mania is doing in America. It will be foolish to deny that there is much truth in applied psychology; but it is also true that there is much fraud. A little knowledge is dangerous, and there are always quacks and cheats. To quote the above-mentioned American writer:

"It would require more space than is available to draw up a list of the better known 'greatest scientists' and 'master minds' whose powers range from developing an imbecile into a genius to growing hair on a pate that for years has been as bald as a billiard ball. A few of the more alluring specimens may be mentioned.

"Pre-eminent is the lady with the radiant glance, who, probably more than any one else, has been instrumental in initiating the so-called 'Applied Psychology Clubs.' She lectures on such irresistible topics as 'How to Live One Hundred Years,' 'How To Make A Million Dollars Honestly,' and—of tragic significance to her listeners—'How To Grow Brains.' Wreathed in smiles, she recites with charming informality the well-known hokum rhyme which begins:

If you think you are beaten, you are;  
If you think you dare not, you don't;  
If you'd like to win, but think you can't—  
It's almost certain you won't.

Then ignoring how human constitutions differ, she tells you to take half a teaspoonful of precipitated chalk every morning—it has helped her, therefore it should help you.

"A worthy rival of this female quack is the Florida 'judge' who sells a 'realization system of practical psychology'—'realization,' I fancy, because it has *realized* a tidy little profit for him. Illustrations of a country home, a Rolls-Royce, a lovely bride, and other such desiderata grace his circulars. You can have these and many other luxuries after you have enrolled in the course—and paid thirty dollars for the privilege. But first you must fill out an elaborate application, resembling a legal document, which includes the question: 'Are you prepared to promise that you will never knowingly use the truths now about to be given into your possession for the injury or oppression of any other person?' . . .

"No less intriguing are the pledges of the 'Wonder Woman' from Los Angeles, founder of 'auto-science.' Enrolled in her course—twenty-five dollars for twelve lessons packed into six lectures—you will learn 'how to radiate magnetism,' and 'how to broadcast your thoughts at will and produce action.' You will be taught the 'psychic handshake,' 'how to increase your business from one hundred to one thousand per cent in a few weeks,' 'how to collect debts without collection agencies or lawyers,' 'how to sell by means of thought transference,' 'how to broadcast for customers and get them,' and 'how to protect yourself against the mental influence of others.' In addition, the lady is a mental healer. She gives absent treatments at 'one mile or ten thousand miles distance, with or without consent of patient,' and—for a consideration—she teaches you her magic power. Naturally, to such a gifted person, psychoanalysis, vocational direction, and analysis of persons 'on sight' are mere child's play. . . .

"Another person deserving honor-



able mention in this legion of quackery is the jovial-looking personality transformer who has assumed the name of one of the noblest families in England.

. . . he 'makes your brain a super-sending and receiving radio instrument.' You need only buy his book for five dollars and 'you can make yourself what you will: great, grand, splendid, supreme in mind and thought, honored wherever you are known.' Certainly five dollars is not too much to pay for such results. A companion volume, 'now the standard work of the Magnetism Club of America,' guarantees a complete change of personality in five days—a boast which may be responsible for the sale of 700,000 copies of the book. . . .

"I could go on citing illustration after illustration of 'master minds,' 'greatest teachers,' 'foremost psychologists,' psychomentors, psychometrists, character analysts, bio-psychologists, metapsychologists, phrenologists, physiognomists, characterologists, numerologists, psychics, and clairvoyants—but a complete directory of charlatans, quacks, and semi-quacks would be both pointless and depressing. However, one 'psychological' contraption, termed a 'Konzentrator,' must be mentioned, if only for its ingenuity. So far as I could determine from the illustration, this device consists of a piece of metal which may be attached to the forehead. With my own modest knowledge of physiological psychology I was somewhat startled to read that this strip of brass, 'revitalizes the neurones, the bi-polar brain nerve cells; develops a more receptive, more retentive memory no course of training can procure, and helps to concentrate thought. That is all.' Considering that the price is only ten dollars, it is not only all—it is enough, and more than enough. . . .

"A much more involved problem for the scientist was the scheme concocted several years ago by a few officers in an Applied Psychology Club numbering

over a thousand members. Eventually the district attorney became curious to learn in what way turning somersaults in a hammock (which the members were urged to buy at twenty dollars each from one of the club leaders) could lengthen the spinal column or so affect the vertebrae as to add to the span of life. . . .

"Unfortunately, many thousands of people . . . still believe that they can get something for nothing, that for a trifling fee they may secure precious secrets, Aladin's lamp, 'open sesame' incantations, wishbones, luck, names, rejuvenation extracts, concentration plates—in other words, all that one can wish for. These optimists are told: 'Tune your conscious Intellectual Energy with the subconscious urge, or Solar Energy, and win! Be sure you are in vibration, and then go ahead. A "Good Name" in vibration with the public's subconscious mind is worth \$80,000,000.' They ponder over this advice and feel somewhat as Archimedes did when he cried out 'Eureka!' "

Conditions, as described above, are certainly lamentable. But what is the remedy? The remedy does not lie in condemning applied psychology wholesale. Undoubtedly great wonders can be accomplished through the mind. It is not all charlatanism. But as is natural, the true thing is far rarer than the commodities commonly exhibited. Here India can help a great deal. A theoretical understanding (which India alone can impart) of the ways of the mind and spirit will protect many against deception. A new outlook on life, inspired by the spirit of renunciation, should also be taught. Otherwise there will always be the temptation to utilise mental and spiritual powers for worldly purposes, and the cupidity of the Westerners will make them easy victims of wicked trickeries. And next, India must show the errors in the present psychological theories of the West—the theories some of which are proving so disastrous to the morals of

mankind. We must cure by fulfilling, and not by denying or destroying.

### Supermen

Our last month's correspondent has also sent us the following question :

"The theory of Evolution is leading us on to the dreams of superman. Is the dream an illusion or a realisable hope? In that case what will be the nature of superman?"

From our answer to the last month's question, it can be imagined what our answer to this question will be. We do not believe we are warranted by the so-called theory of evolution to dream of supermen. Obviously our correspondent thinks that in course of time a race of men(?) will grow on earth, who will possess greater physical and mental powers than now, will perhaps have a different nature and would be endowed with unusual psychic powers. It is quite possible that some individuals will be born of the above description in future as they have been in the past. But that an entire race of this type will appear in course of time is after all only a dream. That is to say, it may or may not. Just as there are so many different species of beings on earth at present, it is imaginable that in some future age, a new species may be born, which may be called supermen. But there are also many more things imaginable. And it is scarcely profitable to hope for all our imaginations to be fulfilled.

Apart from Nature herself evolving supermen, it may be said that men by

their conscious effort may produce them. Means may be found by which men may easily develop their psychic nature, get control over supernatural laws and thus make themselves supermen. Or it may be that the first supermen may devise ways by which children will naturally inherit the superhuman qualities of their parents, as children now do the human qualities. We entertain serious doubts as to the first alternative. Human beings are so constituted now, that it is too much to believe that any such easy means can be found out for all of them. Religion perhaps will remain as difficult as it has always been. For the real difficulty is not so much with the modes of religious practice as with the minds that practise them. These minds, mostly gross and earth-bound, cannot be metamorphosed by a mere wish. We do not see any chance of a revolutionary change of the present conditions. Some persons will in every generation be spiritually and psychically great. But most persons will have to plod on as they are doing now. As to the second alternative until the law of heredity has been proved to be absolute, it would be idle to dream of such psychic inheritance.

This dream of supermen is after all a variation of the dream of the Millennium. We human beings are always expecting a miracle to happen on earth. This is nothing but a vestige of that desire for earthly prosperity, which is so insidious and so difficult to get rid of. True spirituality is a million miles apart from such dreams.

### REVIEW

ST. AUGUSTINE. By Eleanor McDougald, M.A., D. Litt. *Christian Literature Society for India, Madras.* 114 pp. Price 4s. 8.

The book is a small lively portraiture of the spiritual life of St. Augustine with a historical background. The external facts of life have been so depicted as to reveal the internal growth of the man. The whole pro-

duction is interspersed with relevant passages from the Saint's *Confessions* and *Letters*.

The religious life of the Saint began with his conversion at the age of thirty-two. Presently a complete change came upon him. He gave up all secular concerns, retired to an obscure village near Thagaste, his native town, not far from Carthage, and

devoted himself entirely to prayer and study. His high position as a professor of Rhetoric in the University of Milan, his wealth and fame for learning which were ever on the increase, his ambitions, and the gross temptations, to which he had fallen a prey under the influence of the age, could not hold him back. But this congenial mode of living in constant thought of God he was not allowed to pursue long. His celebrity for learning, wisdom and ability was too great to let him live in obscurity. To his great reluctance, he was summoned away three years after to the busy and public life of the Church ministry.

But no sooner did he accept ordination than he was as earnest in the performance of its duties as in his devotional practices in the life of retirement. Indeed, sincerity and earnestness were the two fundamental trials of his character. This was evident not only in his passionate love, his pursuit of knowledge, his enquiries after truth which involved him in Manichæan errors for nine long years, but even in his hesitation to be baptized.

Four years after the taking of holy orders, he was made Bishop of Ilippo. Though called to more conspicuous offices several times, he refused to go beyond it. When this little African town was besieged by the Vandals under Genserich in 430 A.D., he remained within it to share the lot of the people, and died of illness very soon in the seventy-sixth year of his age.

The Saint's devotional spirit particularly manifested itself in his purity, humility and service. No virtue he valued so much as sanctity. No vice he dreaded so much as love of praise and pride of position. Service of his fellow beings was to him a part of the service of God. "Do well whatever thou doest, and then thou hast praised God."

One characteristic of his devotional attitude was very akin to Hindu conception of Divine love. God was to him more a lover than loved. 'Thou wert with me, before I was with Thee'—this is the keynote of his love-consciousness. To the Vaishnavas also God is Love, Lover and Loved at the same time.

Of his numerous writings, our author has taken notice of the important few, the best known of which is the *Confessions*. This is the most faithful record of his life probably up to the forty-second years, when he wrote it as an act of penitence, for the glorification

of God's mercy upon him and for the benefit of others. This penitent mood and constant dread of sin have shrouded his personality with a sort of gloom not altogether dispersed by the rays of Divine light and joy.

The book under review, which is the first of the series "The Bhaktas of the World" compiled under the auspices of the Christian Literature Society for India, is evidently meant for the Hindu readers. The Hindus, to whom Divine love and wisdom are not the monopolised treasures of any sect or community, will certainly welcome the book as profitable reading. In fact, the Religion of Love is essentially one. It has different manifestations in different lands, according to physical features, climatic conditions, racial characteristics of the inhabitants and other causes. It is wise to maintain this diversity in shapes and colours, so long as the universal spirit is intact, in order that religious ideals may suit different temperaments and capabilities. Let us clear our understanding mutually and improve our knowledge of one another, free from proselytising spirit or persuasive policy, so as to realise the universal character of religion in every form.

The book is written in an elegant penetrative style. The printing and the get-up are good.

**ZOROASTRIAN RELIGION AND CUSTOMS.** By *Ervad Sheriarji Dadabhai Bharucha*. D. B. Taraporevala Sons and Co. Bombay. 210 pp. Price Rs. 3.

The book, in its original form, was a paper which represented Zoroastrianism in the Chicago Parliament of Religions in 1893. It appeared in print in the same year. This third edition under review has come out much enlarged and improved with a number of appendices and a long index. The style is lucid. The printing and the get-up are decent. The author, an Athornan by birth, was renowned for his study of Avesta and Pahlavi and was appointed lecturer of Râhmumâi Mâzdayasnan Sabhâ of Bombay, at whose instance he wrote the paper. The book, as can be expected from the nature of the case, is a genuine though commendatory exposition of the Religion of Zoroaster. In the Parsi sacred books the Religion is called Mazdayasni Zarathustri i.e. worship of Mazda preached by Zarathustra who is said to have been taught by Mazda the Great Lord Himself. Zoroaster was the last great teacher of Iran who was completely successful in

exterminating the worship of the Daevas, the evil spirits, from among its people. The author gives a succinct account of the Holy scriptures of the Zoroastrians, their conception of Godhead, cosmology, theory of man's constitution and destiny and also rituals and customs, in the course of which he removes some misconceptions concerning this ancient faith. It is neither polytheism, ditheism nor nature-worship. These are mere accretions on the pure and unmixed monotheism preached by Zarathustra not later than 1200 B.C.

**RAJARSHI RAM MOHAN ROY.** By Manilal C. Parekh, B.A. *Oriental Christ House, Rajkot, Kathiawad.* 189 pp. Price cloth Rs. 3, board Rs. 2.

This short sketch of the life and deeds of Raja Rammohan Roy is, properly speaking, a presentment of the Raja as a religious reformer from the standpoint of an Oriental Christian. The author, though a Christian, has a liberalised view in that he acknowledges the truths of other religions and is not for aggressive missionary propaganda. The pioneer-work of Rammohan in almost all fields of Modern Indian life have made him "the first great reformer of Hinduism in modern times and the father of modern India." The author has given him the same position as that of Vyasa, Yaguavalkya, Sankara and other great sages and teachers of India. We do not think the author is justified in this estimation; for though Rammohan was a reformer and revivalist, he was not a seer and maker.

No accredited follower of the Raja will perhaps agree with the author in his conclusion that the Raja was a Hindu-Christian,—Hindu in name and Christian in spirit. How far indeed was the Raja actually influenced by Christianity?

The fact is that Rammohan was a Hindu Theist. He preached the Unity of God and 'the pure mode of worshipping him in spirit' taught by the Upanishads as the common ground of religious faiths. He failed, however, to realise the necessity of worshipping God in concrete forms instructed by the same Shastras, on account of his aversion to polytheism and idolatry engendered by the study of the Koran in early life and because of some social abuses that came to be associated with the image-worship during the decadence of Hinduism. Rammohan even ascribed those social evils to image-worship.

"In accordance with the mild and liberal

spirit of universal toleration which is well-known to be a fundamental principle of Hinduism," as he says, he acknowledged all religious truths as far as they appealed to his acute reason and strong moral sense. Though an upholder of Vedantic monotheism, he could not appreciate the pure monism of the Vedanta as the rational basis of all religious and moral truths. The theological belief in the fatherhood of God and brotherhood of men, underlying moral observances appealed to him more. This is partly responsible for his leaning to Christian moral codes. But he was equally conscious of the supreme value of the moral principles of the Hindu scriptures. For, in his Introduction to the Isa Upanishad, in which he quotes a Christian moral precept, 'Do unto others as you would be done by,' which according to Mr. Parekh is the Christian precept *par excellence*, he says, "I have been impelled to lay before them (the Hindus) genuine translations of parts of their scriptures, which inculcates not only the enlightened worship of one God, but the purest principles of morality."

Our author is a good visionary. He hopes for the Christianisation of Hinduism with Jesus as the central object of worship. Rammohan, according to him, failed to bring about that Christianisation, because of his unbelief in the theory of Avatar. But Keshab, he says, almost accomplished this. He also finds that Rammohan's orthodox Hindu opponent Shankar Shastri (whom, with a wonderful historical sense, he calls to be the forerunner of the Ramkrishna-Vivekananda School) showed an appreciative attitude towards Christ. Our author himself finds an unifying link between Vaishnavism and Christianity in the theory of Avatar, which eventually led him to prefer the latter to the former.

All these, according to us, only show that the Hindus appreciate Christ; but this does not mean that the Hindus will accept Christ as the typical and perfect Avatar in preference to Rama and Krishna, as the author imagines. The truth is that the Hindus look upon all religious systems as so many phases of One Universal Religion—the Sanatana Dharma—revealed in the Vedanta.

However the author may hail Rammohan as a champion of Christianity, it is he who stemmed the tide of Christian aggression in India and sought for the assimilation of Western ideals on a national basis. It was

under Keshab that the Brahmo movement cut itself adrift from the bedrock of national life. The rising spirit of the country moved in three different directions—Westernism, Liberalism and Conservatism, till the Hindu genius of Ramkrishna-Vivekananda Commingled them in the eternal life-current of India to form one mighty stream of national movement running into the sea of humanity. One who has studied the growth of Modern India, can easily see how the three dominant notes of Rammohan's message—the upholding of the Vedanta, the national-

isation of India and the reconciliation of Eastern and Western ideals have been fulfilled even beyond Raja's conception in the Mission of Vivekananda.

It is not possible to deal with all the points of our disagreement with the author in the course of a brief review. We have only considered the general attitude of the author. The book is interesting. It has as a frontispiece a full-size coloured portrait of the Raja. A short index has been appended to it. The printing and the get-up are not attractive.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### Vedanta Society, Portland, U. S. A.

We have received the following report from the Vedanta Society, Portland, U. S. A. :

Since the outline of the activities of the Vedanta Society of Portland, Oregon, under the leadership of Swami Prabhavananda was sent in March 1928, many interesting changes have been made for the growth of the Society and the members individually. From approximately the first of April, 1928, until the latter half of July the regular classes and lectures continued with a steady attendance and sustained interest.

During the third week of June and at the time of the Rose Festival which is an annual city festival in Portland, Swami Madhavananda of San Francisco visited the Society. It was a great treat when he lectured to large classes that week and to a crowded house in the evening of June 24th. On the days between classes high festivities were in order. The annual picnic at Oswego Lake was held. After an ample dinner the students and friends gathered about the open fireplace and a program consisting of several readings, an humorous one act play and games was given.

The second fortnight of July was spent by Swami Prabhavananda vacationing in California. After visiting friends in San Francisco he went to Los Angeles and Alhambra, California, where he spent the major portion of his vacation period. Several lectures were delivered in the California Centres.

Upon his return to Portland Swami Prabhavananda delivered a comprehensive series of lectures upon the life and teachings

of Sri Ramakrishna at the Sunday Morning Service hour. This series covered some three months and was deeply appreciated by all the students whose privilege it was to hear it. The classes for members continued with studies of the Gospel according to St. John and of the Isha Upanishad. Upon the completion of the studies from the Bible the Swami began interpreting, at the Friday evening classes, "Vivekachudamani" of Sri Sankaracharya. This study will continue through the remainder of the present year. With the beginning of 1929 Swami Prabhavananda began a second study of the Gita. The class nights were shifted to Tuesday and Thursday of each week again as they were when the Society was first organized. At the request of the Swami all new members and those who had enjoyed the study before are making a special effort to attend this series of lectures. This renewed enthusiasm in the class work has resulted in several new members and at present the class room is crowded to capacity both nights of the week.

Early in January of this year by unanimous decision of the official board, the location of the Society's headquarter was changed. A fine hall for the Sunday services was procured in the new Studio Building which has recently been constructed for the housing of musicians and allied artists. The lecture hall is new and modern. The platform arrangement for the public lectures is very harmonious and dignified due to the lighting and floral decorations. Adjoining the hall another smaller room, very comfortably and tastefully furnished, has

been secured for the week day classes, personal conferences, etc.

With the opening in the new quarters Swami Prabhavananda has inaugurated two new activities. He has generously donated his personal library, consisting almost completely of books not available to the American reading public, to be used in a reading room (the regular class room) which is open on afternoons every day in the week except Sundays. The lady students take turns being hostesses for the reading room. In order to make it possible for the general public to meet and become acquainted with him, and thus contact the ideals of Vedanta in a more personal way, Swami Prabhavananda holds an informal question and discussion class on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday afternoons of each week. As a result of these changes and activities the membership has increased and all classes and lectures are better attended than ever before in the history of the Society. Since early in January announcements of the public lectures have been made by Radio over one of the largest broadcasting stations in the city and advertising has been carried in the two leading daily papers. This, we feel, has helped to create a more general interest.

At last it seems the Portland public is becoming aware of the splendid work that Swami Prabhavananda is doing. We feel that it is impossible to put into words an estimate of the deep and untiring efforts of the Swami to bring to the Western world the ideals of the Vedanta. To those who are in personal touch with him in his work this is a constant inspiration. As for the unseen influence upon the lives of all who come in contact with the Swami we can only say its effect is beyond estimate.

The birthday of Swami Vivekananda was observed publicly on Sunday, February third. Swami Prabhavananda delivered two masterly lectures dealing with the life and the contributions of the great leader to modern civilization. There were splendid audiences for both the lectures. Special floral and musical offerings were arranged for the services.

On Wednesday evening, March 13th, at eight o'clock, the Society celebrated the 93rd birthday anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna. At the celebration that evening, after a short opening talk by the Swami, the program was turned over to the students of the Society. A paper giving many of

the interesting details of Ramakrishna's life was read, also a hymn to the Master, written by Swami Vivekananda. These were followed by a recitation from Sir Edwin Arnold's poetic translation of the Bhagavad Gita. After the program the Swami served the students *halwa* and tea, which was a most delightful refreshment. Many beautiful floral offerings by the students lent a peaceful and inspiring atmosphere to the occasion. The public services commemorating the occasion were held on Sunday, March 17th. In the morning at eleven o'clock the Swami lectured upon "Ramakrishna and the Modern Age". At eight in the evening his subject was "Ramakrishna and Universality". Large and appreciative audiences attended both lectures.

#### Swami Vividishananda Sails for America

Swami Vividishananda sailed from Calcutta for the United States of America on the 7th June last. We understand that for the present the Swami will be placed in charge of the Vedanta Society at Portland, Oregon, that is now being conducted by Swami Prabhavananda who will proceed to St. Louis to firmly organize the work there, a nucleus of which was formed before by the Swami himself. Swami Vividishananda is a sweet, loving, young Sannyasin of the Ramakrishna Order with many beautiful traits of character, and we fervently hope that his genial personality will make a charming impression on the American mind. The Swami had recently been in charge of the Ramakrishna Ashrama at Rajkot in Kathiawar for about a year since its inception. Previous to this he had been a member of the Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, for about six years, during which he also edited *Prabuddha Bharata* for two years with great success. We wish him great success in his new field of activity.

#### Swami Madhavananda Returns to India

Swami Madhavananda came back to India *via* Europe on the 24th June last from the United States of America after two years' preaching work in the Hindu Temple of San Francisco. He had been in charge of the Temple there, and had left an indelible impression behind of his character which is always loving and faithful to the

highest principles and ideals of Hindu life. His services being required at home, he had to come back after such a short stay in America. We understand that he will be placed in charge of some important work in connection with the Ramakrishna Mati. and Mission. We accord him a hearty welcome.

#### **R. K. Ashrama, Faridpur, Bengal**

A short report of the Ashrama for the year 1928 is to hand. It speaks of the humble services it has been able to do during the year. A free primary school and a Homeopathic charitable dispensary are attached to the Ashrama for the cultivators and poor people of the locality. There is also a free library for the public. During the year 3 mds. 17 srs. 8 ch. of rice were supplied to two families in times of great crisis. The sum of Rs. 119-7 as. was given to poor students towards paying their fees while other poor persons received Rs. 17-0-6. Two needy students were supplied with food free. The workers of the Ashrama nursed 8 persons and cremated 3 dead bodies. Besides all these, the Ashrama collected and sent a sum

of Rs. 412-4-6 in aid of the famine relief work at Bankura, Bulurghat and Khulna. The total receipts including last year's balance amounted to Rs. 1481-4-3 and the total expenditure to Rs. 1270-10-0 leaving a balance of Rs. 210-10-3 in hand. The important feature of the Ashrama is intended to be the establishment of a Students' Home which it has already started with 2 students. It wants to increase the number at least to 25. For this purpose it is necessary to purchase at least 10 bighas of land near the Ashrama for providing the students with facilities for agricultural training along with other things. The purchase of land will cost Rs. 5000. Digging a tank for raising the land, construction of dwelling houses, school-building and a prayer hall will require at least Rs. 25000. It therefore appeals to the benevolent zemindars of the district and the philanthropic public to contribute their quota to the Ashrama Fund.

We are pleased with the humble services it has so long done and wish to see it as an instrument of greater and more useful service in the future.

### **Ramakrishna Mission Relief Work**

Secretary, R. K. Mission, writes :

In the flooded area of Assam we have got four main centres, at Tarapur, Bhangarpur, Ichamati and Chapghat with six additional sub-centres. These cover an area of 94 sq. miles to include 228 villages and the recipients of help number 6,167 for whom we have distributed 627 mds. 30 srs. of rice excluding what has been spent as a preliminary help. In Nowgong in Assam, we have distributed 300 mds. 10 srs. of rice and the work there has been closed owing to the situation being improved.

We have taken up the work of hut-building from our centre at Tarapur and medical relief has been opened in the relief area of Karimganj. Our work in this province needs much expansion, but this can be possible if only proper funds be forthcoming.

In Akyab of Burma we have so far distributed from three centres 540 mds. of rice, 10 mds. of pulses and 2 mds. of chillies amongst 2,541 flood-stricken people of 26 villages. We have distributed a number of clothes also from some centres.

Cholera having broken out in epidemic type in some villages in the district of Burdwan we have sent a batch of workers to administer relief there.

All contributions for the above will be thankfully received and acknowledged by any of the following :—

- (1) The President, Ramakrishna Mission, P.O. Belur Math, Howrah.
- (2) The Manager, Udbodhan, 1, Mukherjee Lane, Baghbazar, Calcutta.
- (3) The Manager, Advaita Ashrama, 182A, Muktaram Babu St., Calcutta.

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“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।”

“Arise ! Awake ! And stop not till the Goal is reached.”

## UNPUBLISHED LETTERS OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

XVI

(To an American Friend)

ALMORA,  
9th July, 1897.

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“He who is in you and outside of you,  
Who works through all hands,  
Who walks on all feet,  
Whose body are all ye,  
Him worship, and break all other idols !

“He who is at once the high and the low,  
The sinner and the saint,  
Both God and worm,  
Him worship—visible, knowable, real, omnipresent,  
Break all other idols !

“In whom is neither past life  
Nor future birth nor death,  
In whom we always have been  
And always shall be one,  
Him worship. Break all other idols !

“Ye fools ! who neglect the living God,  
And His infinite reflections with which the world is full,  
While ye run after imaginary shadows,  
That lead alone to fights and quarrels,  
Him worship, the only visible !  
Break all other idols !”

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## XVII

*(To an American Friend)*

SAN FRANCISCO,  
7th April, 1900.

But I am more calm and quiet now than I ever was. I am on my own feet, working hard and with pleasure. To work I have the right. Mother knows the rest.

You see, I shall have to stay here longer than I intended, and work. But don't be disturbed. I shall work out all my problems. I am on my own feet now, and I begin to see the light. Success would have led me astray, and I would have lost sight of the truth that I am a Sannyâsin. That is why Mother is giving me this experience.

My boat is nearing the calm harbour from which it is never more to be driven out. Glory, glory unto Mother! I have no wish, no ambition now. Blessed be Mother! I am the servant of Ramakrishna. I am merely a machine. I know nothing else. Nor do I want to know. Glory, glory unto Sri Guru!

## SO SIMPLE YET SO COMPLEX

BY THE EDITOR

## I

It is a sign of the times, and a good sign, that enlightened minds (that is to say, those of them who believe in religion) everywhere in the world are talking of the universal religion, of the harmony or synthesis of religions. Of course, this desire for the universal religion is not always genuine. There are fake articles also. In many cases, this is only another form of that claim which used to consider one's own religion as the best and those of others as inferior or false. This is true specially of many Christian missionaries. When they speak of universal religion, they only mean, we have noted, what they have always meant, namely, that Christianity is the only saving religion. Only nowadays they condescend that other religions also have some good points in them, which however can be perfected only in and through Jesus Christ.

But there is no denying that professions of the universal religion or

harmony of religions are also often genuine. This phenomenon is nothing to be wondered at. The peoples of the world have come in close contact with one another; and just as there has been interchange of commodities, there has also been interchange of thoughts. And how can a comparison between the different systems of thought be helped? And then, in spite of everything, the humanity of mankind cannot be gainsaid. All are men. Necessarily there must be communion between them and consequent fusion. The process is going on and is bound to be more and more rapid with the passing of days. As a result a basic thought is gradually evolving, systematising the various thought-currents and aspirations of the world, and interlinking them. The thought of men has to become as it were an organism. The consciousness of this impelling need is growing clearer every day. Thinking minds everywhere are feeling its impact. They feel that religion has to be seen in a new light and that there must be

a revision of their attitude towards the different religions.

But if wish were everything, the earth would have become a heaven by this time. A mere wish or a mere intellectual understanding is nothing. There must be *Sādhana* behind,—hard struggle till the idea has become a reality. Those who have studied the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna closely, know how difficult it is to truly realise the spirit of universal religion or harmony of religions. What hard austerities did he not undergo in order to realise it! He cleared his mind of the least prejudice and thus realised the pure unmixed truth. But we content ourselves with a little intellectualising and then air our views on universal religion or harmony of religions. We hope we shall be pardoned if we say that we often find much confusion of ideas in those professed views. There is comparatively little understanding of the universal religion as it really is.

One fruitful cause of confusion is that very few of us *practise* religion seriously. If we practise, we can know the inner significance of religion and its nature and ways correctly and minutely. As it is, we have only some *ideas* about religion, and not the reality of it. We judge it intellectually and miss the substance. This was apparent in an opinion expressed in a Christian paper some time back. The writer considered universal religion as something which has outgrown all errors and imperfections and has thus become worthy of the reverence of all men. This conception is naive but not real. One reason why he conceived such an idea of the universal religion is that his view of religion is mainly intellectual. Had he practised religion seriously, he would have found that the needs of the intellect are not the same as the needs of the heart and life. Religion to be worth the name must engulf and remould our whole personality. And one's personality is a queer thing.

What intellectually is very nice often does not satisfy our inner being.

## II

The fact is, religion has to be conceived from two different standpoints, subjective and objective. Most of us consider it from the objective viewpoint. And hence most misunderstanding. When we speak or think of religion, we often confuse the two viewpoints and the whole truth is seldom reached or expressed. What is the difference between them?

By religion we often mean a creed. We study a people ;—we find that they have certain beliefs regarding supernatural entities and their nature and their relations to their worshippers. They observe certain rites and customs. They have a mythology. And all these they uphold on the basis of a philosophy, ill conceived or well. We study all these different elements and form an opinion about the religion of the people. What is our standard of judgment? As mankind is progressing, it is enquiring into the nature of reality and soul, and is trying to find out the nature of the ultimate good. It has thus accumulated a fund of knowledge by which it can judge which is higher and which is lower among the different religious outlooks. Suppose philosophic enquiry has convinced us that the reality in itself is an indeterminate Divine Substance, infinite and eternal and that the individual soul is really identical with that Divine Substance. Let us suppose that we have also been convinced that the ultimate good consists in knowing one's real self. If this is the highest conception of religion, then it becomes easy to judge which religions are the highest and which lower. Such knowledge and such judgments, however, are only objectively true. This is essentially an intellectual estimate of religion. This way we do not get a full knowledge of religion. We have also to know it subjectively.

Religion is not a matter of opinion or intellectual conviction merely. We may have come to know intellectually that the highest religion is the realisation of oneself as the Divinity Itself. But when it comes to actual realisation, we shall find that we are not fit to realise even the very low dualistic ideals. Our philosophical knowledge will be of little avail. We may think that God is formless and infinite. But when we want to perceive Him, we shall find that our mind is so gross and obtuse that it cannot conceive even a subtle idea, what to speak of perceiving the spirit. This lamentable disparity between intellectual comprehension and capacity to realise is the fate of almost all men in the world. We have progressed too far in ideas. But we lag far far behind in perception. The result is that our intellectual convictions always conflict with our spiritual practices.

But that is not all. There is also the question of inclinations. An intellectual estimate of religion is apt to forget that our likes and dislikes create preferences. Intellectually, a religious ideal may appear superior. But we may not like it. We may feel drawn to an ideal which may be, objectively considered, inferior. Yet our life's fulfilment would be possible through the lower ideal and not the so-called higher one. Our experience, not of this life only, but of all past lives, stands behind our choice of religious ideals. One's experience invariably differs from another's. There will necessarily be differences of choice.

Then again there are history and environments. A people's past history and present social, political, economical, racial and cultural circumstances have a deep determining influence on the development of its religious ideas. For they all concern and affect life.

Now these and many other factors make our intellectual judgment of religion of little value in practical life. We are compelled to take an inside view of religion. We require to see it

as it is actually practised and as it succours and fulfils life. And when we do so, we find that an intellectual determination of value is after all a secondary consideration. An ounce of practice is much better than tons of theories. If that is so, what does it matter which is the highest religion from the objective view-point, when we know that few, very few are fit and inclined to practise it? This factor of inclination is a very important one. Judged from its standpoint, there cannot be higher or lower among the religious ideals. Suppose one likes the *Bhakti* ideal more than the ideal of *Jñāna*. *Jñāna* may, intellectually speaking, represent a superior ideal. But what does it matter when it comes to the question of choice? We choose according to our aptitude. And for one, *Bhakti* may prove the most attractive and thus the best. Of course there are gradations in each religious ideal, and thus higher and lower. But no higher or lower among the different religious ideals so far as individual choice is concerned. Let every man have what he really can or is inclined to practise. Every man's *Dharma* is the best for him. Only let him practise it with sincerity and earnestness. This is the subjective view. It considers above all the practicability of religion and not merely its theoretical excellence. Those who do not seriously practise religion forget this essential consideration. Hinduism is very particular about it. This it terms as *Adhikāri-bheda*,—every man will have a religion according to his spiritual fitness.

Now, if there is to be a universal religion, can it be a religion? Non-Hindu preachers of universal religion say, Yes, and by this they at once show their ignorance of the inwardness of religion and of the characteristics of the universal religion. For when we want to exalt a particular credal religion to the position of universal religion, what we intend to do is to impose that creed on all, without considering whether people are fit or inclined to practise it.

Take the attitude of those Christian missionaries who profess that Christianity is the universal religion. Whether Christianity is the highest religion we shall see later on. But supposing that it is so, is every man fit to practise it? There are many psychological considerations which are easily overlooked in thrusting it on all alike. It cannot be really practised by all. Christ represents a type of religion which requires a highly developed spirit of renunciation. One must have a surfeit of the enjoyment of the world before one can realise the Christ-spirit to any appreciable degree. Without this pre-requisite, the religion of the Christ can but be poorly practised and realised. And since the West has scarcely fulfilled this condition, Christianity has failed there as a deep spiritual force. It would be manifestly wrong to say that Christianity has no influence there. But we are not here speaking of religion as a social force, but as a means of spiritual experience. In this sense Christ has no very large place in the heart of the West. What is wanted is not a verbal allegiance to a religious ideal, but the transcendence of the limits of matter and accession to the realm of spirit. We must realise the superconscious. We must *experience* it. And that religion is best for one, which advances one *most easily and quickly* towards that experience. In order to achieve quick results we have to choose a religion which is suitable to our generally gross and worldly nature. But the missionaries have no consideration for this need. They must thrust their Christ on every one.

The universal religion is, therefore, one which has within it many different gradations of spiritual ideals and practices, which can best respond to every one's spiritual needs according to his *Samskâras*, aspirations, experiences and inclinations, and his social and other circumstances. It cannot be one particular creed, however exalted. For no single creed can ever satisfy the infinitely various minds of mankind.

It must, therefore, be an aggregate of infinitely various and sometimes even contrary creeds. It must subsume the lowest as well as the highest religious views,—*it must provide for all*.

It will be at once said that the universal religion has then always been existing. For all the creeds of the world taken together do actually form the universal religion, and nothing new is to be evolved. In a sense, this is true. The universal religion may be said to have been existing since the discovery of *Advaitism* (for we cannot progress further when the Unity has been reached). But in another sense, this is not true. For a thing may be existing, but unless and until we become conscious of it and apply it to the details of our life, such existence means little to us. What is required is that we must become conscious of the universal religion. And the necessary adjustment will follow. And what a readjustment! Till now we have been shut up within our own views of life and reality and we have opposed those of others, nay, we have sometimes even extirpated them for these differences of views. Now we have to give up this exclusive and inimical attitude and make peace with others; and we have to examine our own views in the light of the other views and reform them whenever and wherever necessary.

### III

But is the universal religion a mere aggregate of the different creeds and a mere recognition of their existence? Does it not imply any organic relations among these different creeds? Is it not to be accepted as an organic whole, capable of development? We answer, Yes. No, it is not a mere loose aggregate. It is an organic entity and has to be conceived and perceived as such. In this, the objective view of religion is somewhat necessary and useful. For the intellect also must be satisfied. We have to take into account the different spiritual ideals of the differ-

ent creeds and their respective experiences, and have to systematise them according to their metaphysical values. In so doing we have to evaluate spiritual experiences both from the ontological and the psychological standpoint. That is to say, we must divest them of their theological garbs. We shall not discuss it here, but we shall assume that monism represents the highest view of reality: only *Brahman* is, which is Existence-Knowledge-Bliss, the world is only an appearance, false, and the individual soul is really *Brahman* Itself. If this is the conclusion of the highest metaphysics, then psychologically speaking, all dualistic and semi-dualistic practices and experiences are but steps to that monistic realisation. We can thus roughly classify religions according to these three main gradations,—dualistic, qualified monistic and monistic. So far about the credal goals. As regards their methods also, a general systematisation is possible according to the main faculties of the human mind, knowing, feeling and willing. If we study the various methods employed by the votaries of the different creeds of the world, we shall find that they are characterised by either *Jñāna* (Knowledge), *Bhakti* (Love) or *Karma* (Action). The methods may be purely *Jñāna Yoga*, *Bhakti Yoga* or *Karma Yoga*, or their mixtures. There is also another method. It is found that spiritual progress through any of those paths is achieved by a transformation of being, characterised by certain signs and states, physiological and mental. The books on *Yoga* have characterised them to be eightfold. Why not, then, bring about those changes directly? This is called *Rāja Yoga*, the path of psychical transformation. All creeds advocate one, more or all of these four processes, in either pure or mixed forms. Thus systematisation of religions is possible both as to goals and methods, i.e., philosophies and practices. The systematisation of the mythologies may be difficult, but they

are not after all so essential, and their evaluation and consequent systematisation through their psychological values are not impossible. It is all objective, however, it must be remembered. And this objective organisation of the world's creeds has already been made in essential forms by the *Vedānta* philosophy. The *Vedānta* philosophy correlates the different grades of religion and is thus the intellectual basis of the universal religion.

But that is only the outer aspect, most negligible; and though it is beneficial to some extent, it may also breed misunderstanding unless it is based on a subjective systematisation, on an actual experience of religious as interlinked realities. How is that to be done? The means that may immediately suggest itself is to take the specialities of each religion or creed, practise them and make a sort of combination of them. This is the way that was resorted to by Keshab Ch. Sen. But it is not real. It lacks organic relationship. We may pluck beautiful flowers from a garden and make them into a bouquet which, if arranged cleverly, may look beautiful. But we know, the flowers are not organically related thereby and the bouquet will fade and drop down very soon. And even if it lasts, it will form only another new creed. The real secret lies deep down in the human nature. A religion in its higher stages of development, absorbs the entire being of man. The goal when it is reached, is not apprehended by only a part of the mind or being. It is really the transformation of our entire being. As such, if the ideal of a particular religion is to be realised, we must above all mould our being after its pattern. Those who are content with realising only one credal ideal in life, has an easy task. But if we want to realise the universal religion which, as we have seen, contains all the different ideals of all the religions, we have to mould our personality after the patterns of all those ideals. Apparently an

impossible task. For there are innumerable psychological divergences between those credal ideals. One instance will suffice. We may establish different relationships with the Divinity. We may look upon Him as our Father or Mother, or as our Brother or Lover. How can we look upon Him as Mother and Lover at the same time? And yet, if the universal religion is to be realised, we have evidently to accomplish even the impossible. But how?

We see the secret in the life of Sri Ramakrishna. We do not mean the method he followed in realising the different religions, which was to practise each religion separately. We refer to the psychological condition that lay behind that practice and also throughout his latter life. He had a mind which was in itself absolutely transparent. It had no special leaning to any particular creed. It had no bias. It was extremely mobile and formless. It was not set into any fixed form. Those who follow any particular creed, have their mind moulded into a fixed shape. It cannot be harmonised with the moulds of other creeds. It is rigid. But the mind and being of Sri Ramakrishna was colourless, transparent, transcendent and formless. It, therefore, could be transformed into any required shape under inspiration, and then, so long as that particular inspiration lasted, he was entirely, to the very bottom of his being, of that creed. Time and often he illustrated this in his life. Suppose some one sang a song to him about Sri Krishna as the lover of the cowherd maidens of Brindavan. The moment he heard this, he was filled with the inspiration, the *Bhāva*, of that spiritual outlook, and he was completely transformed into a cowherd maiden of Brindavan, adoring and yearning for Sri Krishna. And then if any one spoke or sang of other *Bhāvas* or spiritual moods and outlooks, they jarred on him and caused him excruciating pain. At another time he would be filled with

the *Bhāva* of the Divine Mother. And then the *Bhāva* of the *Gopis* would jar on him. He would then be the little child of the Divine Mother, and nothing else.

The realisation of the universal religion, then, is nothing else than creating that psychological condition which was adaptable to all moods, and making one's personality absolutely pure and spiritual, transparent and mobile. So long as there is the least desire for earthly enjoyment, gross or subtle, so long we cannot make our being completely pure. For desires make the mind cling to the phenomenal world and thus encrust it with the fixity of shape. One must be like the air filling every space but untrammelled by none. One must be like water, itself without shape, but adaptable to any shape. One must not have a special inclination for any particular credal ideal. One must be, in short, more and more like God Himself, who is everything, but is not fixed or bound by anything. We do not dissect the different creeds and take the beautiful parts of each to combine them into a fantastical form. We take each creed in its entirety and realise its ideal fully. We do not make any change in the creeds themselves. The change is in our mind and being. Thus we may become Christian, Muhammadan, Buddhist, *Vaishnava*, *Shākta*, or *Shaiva* at will and fully and completely. This is the subjective systematisation of the creeds of the world. This is the realisation of the universal religion.

How to bring about the necessary psychological condition? We shall not discuss that here. We dwelt on it in our last March article. Is it possible for us ordinary men to realise the universal religion? As the conditions are at present, it must be confessed its realisation will not be plentiful. But it is also true that circumstances are changing rapidly, and the world-conditions are impelling the human mind to outgrow credal limits and become more and more universal in

outlook. There is the fear of our growing universal at the expense of the wealth of the particulars. That sort of universality will neither enrich our own self nor last and harmonise with the world-conditions permanently. There is the other, the real, universality which comprehends the particulars, and this is what the world seeks to-day. We believe the times are propitious and even this most difficult ideal is easier to realise in the present age. Though we may not realise it in full, we can surely do so to some extent. Most of us can be at least intellectually convinced. Practice and realisation will follow by and by. But this much is sure that those who will *practise* universal religion will be more in accord with the Time-spirit than those who merely accord it intellectual assent. The present age wants universal men and they cannot be without the practice and realisation of the universal religion.

#### IV

Hinduism claims that it is the universal religion. This claim seems apparently to be repudiated by the very fact of its being called by a name: how can one single religion become the universal religion? But really Hinduism has no name. It is the foreigners, always credal, who attached this name to our religion. Our religion is only Religion, *Dharma*, the Eternal Religion. It is no one single creed, but a combination of many creeds with many grades of development, and it has the tendency and capacity to evolve and assimilate any number of new creeds. It recognises three main stages of spiritual evolution,—dualism, qualified monism and monism, and accepts all correct methods of God-realisation as true and justified. It is not based on the authority of any person, however exalted, yet has place in it for any number of prophets and Incarnations. This is an important point. Any religion which claims to be founded on the authority of and is

attached to any person, can only be a creed and not the universal religion. For no person can be impersonal, and the universal religion accepts *all* persons and is also impersonal. The claim of Christianity to be the universal religion thus falls to the ground at once. In fact when Christians put forward this claim, they show only a lamentable ignorance of the true meaning of the universal religion and the intricate facts of human psychology.

Another claim of some Christian missionaries is that Christ is the greatest manifestation of love. We confess that our perusal of the Gospels has not convinced us of that. What is love? Let our human experience answer. Let us face facts boldly. Which do Christians consider to be the greatest expression of love in human life? Is it the pity for a suffering man? Or is it the affection of a servant for his master, of a friend for his friend, of a child for its mother or mother for her child, or of a lover for a lover? Which is the deepest

most ecstatic? No reasonable man can deny that pity is far from that in depth and rapture, which is experienced by, say, lovers. Christians say that Christ sacrificed himself for the redemption of mankind, and therefore that was the greatest manifestation of love. Hindus say that God came in the human form and loved human beings as a lover loves his beloved. Is that not far more intimate and deep? In Christ's love for men there was the consciousness of human weakness and sin, but in Sri Krishna's love, there was not the slightest thought of those outer aspects of human personality—for weakness and sin are really external aspects of man. God became man and men became God. Such a manifestation of love the world has not witnessed.

The universal religion has to recognise that all the different strands of human heart have to be spiritualised and perfected in God. The love that men and women, mother and child, friend and friend, or servant and

master feel between them are not exclusively for men. Their streams are not to be lost in the desert sands of of worldly life, but are to grow in power and volume and flow to the infinite heart of God Himself. "The universe is the wreckage of the Infinite on the shores of the finite." The love that expresses itself variously in human relations is a dim reflection of the Divine love itself. Redeemed of the human imperfections, these very love-relations become consecrated to God. These emotional relationships have been evolved through human experiences, but they flow originally from God Himself. Nothing is to be left aside as earthly, everything is to be experienced as the being of God. This is another deeper aspect of the universal religion. Hinduism paid due attention to this. It found that there are generally five emotional relationships between men and men: *Shānta* (calm, peaceful love, that which we feel generally for humanity, for our neighbours, for the suffering humanity, towards Nature, etc.), *Dāsyā* (the attitude of a servant towards his master, of a son to his father, of a subject towards his king, etc.), *Sakhya* (friendship), *Vātsalya* (affection of a mother for her child), and *Madhura* (the love of a man and woman, especially an illicit love which is obviously more impetuous). This is only a general classification. There are other complex relationships also, and it may be that with the passing of ages, new modes of emotional relationship may be evolved. But that Hinduism is ready to recognise all relationships as pathways to God is evidenced by the fact that even enmity has been considered to be a very effective relationship between man and God. For enmity compels one to think absorbingly of one's enemies, and the more one thinks of God, in whatever way, the nearer one approaches Him.

Does Christianity admit the validity of all these relationships? The Christian creed offers little scope for

the free play of these various human emotions. According to Hindu classification, the love that was manifested through Christ is the *Shānta* and *Dāsyā* love, the lowest two of the five *Bhāvas*. This defect of Christianity also makes it unfit to be the religion for all mankind. We must not exclude God from the intimacies of our daily experience. Like our Sunday clothes, we must not make God the concern of only a small fraction of our superficial life. Let Him suffuse all our emotions and aspirations. Let Him come deep into our everyday realities and flood them with His divine effulgence, and the earth will bloom like heaven.

## V

The fact is, the universal religion is directly based on *Advaitism*. "All this is verily *Brahman*." This truth is the root and the fibres of all universality. We find this pre-eminently manifested in the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna, the preacher and exemplar of the universal religion. A Christian writer sometime ago thus characterised Sri Ramakrishna and his teaching: "The way in which he would express his attitude is, I think, to claim that all religions lead to God. To understand how he reached this conclusion we need to know what his view of the universe was. We obtain a clue to this in a statement he is reported to have made towards the close of his life. 'I have now come to a stage of realization,' he says, 'in which I see that God is walking in every human form and manifesting Himself alike through the saint and the sinner, the virtuous and the vicious. Therefore when I meet different people I say to myself: "God in the form of the saint, God in the form of the sinner, God in the form of the righteous."' He who has attained to such realization goes beyond good and evil, above virtue and vice, and realizes that the Divine is working everywhere. It is obvious that to him who has attained



such realization there is no scale of values by which religions or religious teachers can be classified as good or bad, higher or lower. God is equally to be reached in them all: He is—as the pantheistic poet puts it—‘as full as perfect in a hair as in heart.’ Tolerance is axiomatic on such premises as these.”

Pantheism is a bugbear to Westerners, especially to the Christian missionaries. We do not know what they mean by pantheism. This is not an Indian word; and we for ourselves have never been sure in which sense or senses they use this word. But what we mean when we say “All this is *Brahman*” is as follows: The ordinary man undoubtedly perceives this universe as a composite of good and evil; it is to him full of miseries and imperfections; it is not at all ideal. Though he dreams of a perfection, very vaguely, very imperfectly,—most men are not capable of even such a vague dream—yet the reality which he actually experiences, is very sordid. Unless one is very dull, one would not consider Hindus as looking upon these sordid realities as Divine. Are Hindus devoid of all sense? It is not in this sense, then, that Hindus say “All this is *Brahman*.” Hindus ask: “Why do we perceive the reality as so sordid? Is this the true nature of reality?” The Hindu metaphysics says that the reality is in itself nothing but *Brahman*, *Satchidānanda*, Existence-Knowledge-Bliss. It is not really what it is appearing now. The numerous experiences of Hindu saints and sages confirm this view. Knowing that the reality is really *Brahman*, the Hindus ask again: “Why do we not perceive it as *Brahman*? What obstructs the entrancing vision?” The answer is: Ignorance, impurity of the mind, desire, attraction for worldly things. The next question is: “How to get rid of ignorance and desire? How to purify the mind?” By concentration on the spiritual self, by withdrawing the mind from the world, by looking

upon all things as Divine and behaving with them as such. A twofold process has to be applied: Deify the world and purify the mind. Thus it will be seen that when the Hindus say “All this is *Brahman*,” what they do is to remind themselves of the *true* nature of the world. They seek to change their outlook. There is a perpetual struggle within them,—every moment the sordid view of the world and the consequent behaviour towards it want to assert themselves; and they struggle to conquer and replace them by the higher spiritual outlook. Can there be a greater morality than this and a greater destiny for mankind? To feel everything as God and to behave with it as such means a tremendous thing. Can we serve the world better than by this attitude? What can be a better motive of service? Suppose there is God and an imperfect man before you. To which would your service be greater and deeper? For which would your love be greater and deeper? For God or for man? Certainly for God, if you are really spiritual. What, then, is the point of the above-mentioned Christian writer when he asks: “Can we be content with a religion that leaves us indifferent in a world of illusion?” Really ignorance cannot go further. The writer seems to imply that “pantheism” tends to neutralise all struggle to realise better conditions either socially or individually. The argument is that if we consider good and evil as same, we no longer try to conquer evil and realise good. But “pantheism” does not mean this. It does not ask us to consider everything as *same*, but as *God*. That makes a tremendous difference. What can be a greater incentive to good than the struggle to realise God in everything? We find that at present we are not perceiving the reality as Divine and we know that it is due to our mental imperfections and impurities. And thus in trying to realise everything as Divine, we are constantly trying to purify our mind. And as the Divine

vision is growing clearer, and in order that it may do so, we offer every being our worshipful service, for do we not know that even though we may not perceive it now, the Divine is for ever enshrined in the heart of everything? So there is no neutralisation of struggle and no indifference to the realities. The writer remarks: "It is not easy to see how we can distinguish good and evil if we have not had some glimpse of eternal Goodness, or how we can pursue truth with the ardour of self-sacrifice if we have not some hope of touching the feet of Him who is the absolutely True." Does the writer mean that Hindus have no sense of good and evil and no ardour for truth? It is a preposterous statement to make. The writer must remember that India is still the most moral nation on earth and that here of all countries, people still give up their *all* in pursuit of spiritual truth. We do not want to dwell on the morality and love of truth of those countries where the religion of Christ has been preached for ever so many centuries. But does the writer seriously suggest that morality and truth is greater there than in India?

But what is morality of which they talk so much? Does the so-called pantheistic outlook of the Hindus make them incapable of distinguishing good and evil? So far as we know, philosophers have not yet been able to determine finally the source and origin of moral consciousness. But all agree that there *is* moral consciousness in every man. The religion of the Christians is not required to make men moral. Men are moral by nature. Hindus are not exceptions. Hindus also have moral consciousness. But Hindus do not give the same value and scope to morality as the above-mentioned writer appears to do. He seems to imply that the distinction of good and evil is as eternal as God Himself and that it must last through the whole course of man's spiritual evolution. But this only shows that the writer has not taken cognisance of the higher states of

spiritual consciousness. The moral consciousness of the ordinary man is thickly overlaid with social conventions. That is a poor sort of morality. But evidently the above-mentioned writer has this kind of morality mostly in mind. But as we grow in spirituality, and begin to perceive the being of God, we find that that alone is evil which impedes the Divine vision and that good which clarifies it;—that is evil in which God is dimly manifest and that good in which He is more manifest. Morality, then, is no longer conventional. But to this vision, the distinction of good and evil becomes less real. For what is good and what is evil? Is not evil another name for less good and good another name for less evil? Is there any such thing which is purely evil or purely good? Even in the heart of the greatest evil there abides some good, and even the greatest good breeds some evil. The distinction is in fact unreal. And it is scarcely logical to call God as the Good. The idea may be good as a normative ideal for the masses. But it is not truly philosophical. God is above good and evil in His transcendental aspect and both evil and good in His immanent aspect. To whom does evil belong if not to God? Whatever is, good or evil, is of God. This is the truth. And Hindus do not shirk it as the Christians do. Those who are conversant with the nature of superconscious realisations, know that though the ordinary code of morality may not exist there, there is yet a kind of morality, which leads always to the elevation of men and never to their degradation. The morality of spiritual men uplifts, though not in the manner of our so-called moral men—the two moralities are not at all alike. That morality is a kind of spiritually exalting power, and that alone counts. It is this higher morality which is professed and practised by the "pantheists," much higher and different from the ordinary view of morality. It obliterates the distinction between

so-called good and evil ; but it makes man Divine, and if God is all right, and then this "patheism" is also all right.

And even that is not all. Paradoxical as it may seem, the sense of evil and sin becomes a thousand times keener as one grows in the perception of the Divine. We have seen this exemplified again and again in the life of Sri Ramakrishna. He could not bear the least contact of impurity. Even the slightest impurity was cognisable by his extremely pure mind which would recoil from it instinctively. Just as a bright light makes darkness keener by contrast, so the consciousness of God makes the perception of evil and impurity infinitely more acute. "It is only through realising the Divinity inherent in man that we can truly grasp the depths of his misery ; for not till then will his condition of spiritual servitude and his lack of perfection and divine happiness appeal to our conscience as almost tangible evidence. It is the sad feeling of contrast between the Divinity in man and his present ignorant state with the suffering it entails, that pricks the heart to serve mankind. Without the realisation of the Divine Spirit in himself and in others, true sympathy, true love, true service are impossible." (Swami Shivananda). The inherent Divinity in a man and his present imperfections are simultaneously perceived by the man of spiritual vision. The fact is, the same power of Divine consciousness moves in two different directions at once. In one movement, it makes the distinction of good and evil, purity and impurity extremely keen and poignant. In another, it obliterates all such distinctions. Apparently contradictory, both these are expressions of the same realisation, "All this is verily *Brahman*."

Even ordinary morality the Hindus do not make light of. The daily life of the Hindus bears eloquent witness to it. And if the foreign critics will have a little patience to study the books on

*Yoga*, they will find that all religious life has been asked to grow on strong moral foundations. The moral virtues have to be practised assiduously and sincerely and not merely conventionally. Let them read the classical book of Patanjali. They will find that the very first two of the eight steps of *Yoga* relate to moral discipline, a morality which even the most puritanical cannot cavil at. But Hindus do not make much of it. For they know that morality is not really even the beginning of spirituality. Spirituality begins only after a full development of morality. They also know that morality by itself is of little help in solving the riddle of life and attaining the Eternal Beatitude. They know that the long journey is still undone, and that is the real task.

We would not have dilated upon these points, had it not been that the unnecessary fear of "pantheism" with its supposed indifference to morality and the realities of life, has become a real hindrance to the growth of the spirit of universal religion. Non-Hindus are mightily afraid of it. And yet without it, there cannot be any universal religion. We are sorry to do so, but we must clearly point out that it is useless for non-Hindus to talk of universal religion unless they are prepared to accept its full implication. It is not good to confuse the issue. We do not see any hope of a personal and credal religion, for example, Christianity, ever becoming the universal religion. Christians must undergo a complete change of heart before they can even comprehend the universal religion, much less practise it. Either they must transform themselves, or they must cease from talking of universal religion. It is better they profess as some of them are doing that "*It is impossible to bring the religions of the world into harmony.*" We for ourselves are not pessimistic. Slowly but surely the idea is gaining ground. It may be resisted for a time, but all resistance must give way before it one

day or another. Powerful allies are at work. Science with its destructive influence is undermining the bulwarks of all narrowness and bigotry. All creeds and religions must readjust themselves to the changing circum-

stances. We shall wait with hope, in readiness for the spiritual service that will surely be asked of us by other religions. And when the call for help comes, may we not tarry behind for want of preparedness.

## THE DIARY OF A DISCIPLE

12TH NOVEMBER, 1912.

On the morning of that day, the Disciple went with a monk to visit the Dakshineswar Kali Temple. A niece of Sri Ramakrishna was then living near the Temple and used to come every morning to take care of the room where Sri Ramakrishna had lived. On meeting her there, the Disciple requested her to tell him the stories of those days when as a young girl she had lived with the Master at the Temple.

She said: "Myself and my aunt (the wife of Sri Ramakrishna) used to live in the *Nahavat*. The Master used to call us *Suka* and *Sâri* (names of birds). Very few of his visitors knew that we lived there. About noon he used to enquire by saying: 'Have the *Suka* and *Sâri* been given their meals?' M. used to sit over there taking down notes of conversations with a pencil. He said once that he thought that the Master was actually tending those birds and talking of their feeding. . . . The Master used to tell me and aunt stories from the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, e.g., the story of King Nala; and he would repeatedly question us to know if we had understood the stories. He used to make me repeat them and then remark with satisfaction: "That is why I call you a *Suka* (parrot)!"

"Once I asked him: 'You always speak of *past*, *future* and *present*. What are they?' He said: 'Just now I am telling you stories: this is *present*. You will return to the *Nahavat* and tell your aunt: "He said so and so;" and when I shall die, you will say: "He said" and so on, This is *past*. Similarly

you say: "He will tell me." This is *future*.'

"Formerly, our meals used to be supplied from the Temple. Then it was suggested that aunt would prepare our food. Hridoy objected saying that the *Nahavat* was too small a place to accommodate a kitchen. But the Master said: 'You don't know. They are young girls, they must have some occupation.' And he said to me: 'It is customary for women to cook. In the ancient times even queens used to cook for their husbands. So it is given in the stories, and those stories are not false. It is said that one day Sri Krishna was at his meal at Dwarka with Rukmini sitting by, when suddenly the plaintive prayers of Draupadi being insulted by Duhshasana at Indraprastha reached the ears of the Lord. He at once rose from his meal. Then Rukmini cried out tearfully: "Oh, I must have committed a sin to-day, otherwise why could not the Lord partake of the food prepared by me?" It is said that the queen's palace had golden walls. Could she not engage a cook? But nowadays a man earning Rs. 30 a month takes away his wife from his parents and engages a cook for her, and thinks that they are living in paradise! Your mind will remain pure if you engage yourself in cooking. . . .'

"One night the Master was filled with the spiritual mood of Radha. He identified himself with Her. He thought he would go to the arbour to meet Sri Krishna and accordingly came out of his room and entered the rose-garden. He had no external consciousness. He got entangled in the rose-

bushes and was scratched all over with thorns and there he stood. The night watchmen found him and awoke us. I at once went to the Temple manager and brought him there. Many woke up and crowded there. Aunt also came there and burst out crying.—This was the first time she was seen publicly. When the Master was carried inside, he said: 'I am going to the harbour. Why are you troubling me? Let me go.' We began to sleep in his room, aunt covering herself with a thick cloth from head to foot.

"After two or three days, the Master said: 'Why are you suffering this way? It is so hot now, surely you would like to sleep uncovered. Better you sleep in the *Nahavat*.' We obeyed.

"One night—it was the fullmoon night of the month of *Phālguna*—the ladies of Balaram Babu's family came here to see Sri Ramakrishna without informing the men of their family. They passed all the night in joy with the Master and started walking for Calcutta in the early hours of the morning. Suddenly a storm burst. The Master became restless in anxiety, and expressed the fear that they must have perished on the way. Very early in the morning, he sent Yogin to find out if they were lying dead on the road. Yogin went to their house. On seeing him, the men of the family asked: 'Well, Yogin, why so early?' 'Oh, nothing is the matter,' he replied and went into the inner apartments. The ladies had all returned safe. They also asked him where he came from so early and if the Master was doing well."

25TH APRIL, 1913.

The Disciple was able with some difficulty to meet Swami Brahmananda alone at the Belur Math to put him some personal questions. He said: "Maharaj, I am finding it impossible to calm the mind."

*Swami*: "Practise a little meditation and *japa* every day. Never stop for a single day. The mind is like a restless child, it wants to run away. You must

bring it back again and again and apply it to the meditation of the Lord. Go on this way for two or three years, and then an inexpressible joy will fill your mind. Meditation and *japa* appear dry in the beginning. But still you must engage the mind in the contemplation of the Deity, like swallowing a bitter medicine. Slowly spiritual joy will grow in you. People work so hard to pass examinations! To realise God is easier even than that. Only let them call on Him with a calm cheerful heart."

*Disciple*: "Sir, your words fill me with hope. But sometimes I feel very much cast down; and I think that all my spiritual practices must be in vain since they have brought me no higher experience."

*Swami*: "No, no, there is nothing to despair about. Work must have its effect. If you go on repeating His name, be it wholeheartedly or half-heartedly, it must produce results. Practise assiduously. Practise regularly for some time,—you will have peace and joy. Meditation does not give mental peace merely, but also physical health,—you have less disease. So one must practise meditation even for physical improvement."

*Disciple*: "Maharaj, is it necessary to receive a *mantram* from a Guru? Cannot one practise wholeheartedly according to one's spiritual mood?"

*Swami*: "Initiation into a *mantram* helps the concentration of mind. Otherwise your mind will change and fluctuate: to-day you will like the Kali-form, to-morrow the Hari-form and next day perhaps the formless aspect of God. And thus your mind will not be concentrated upon one. . . ."

In the evening the Swami spoke about a lady who had established a girls' school in Calcutta. She was fastidious in certain respects and did not trust anyone and was easily irritable. No servant stayed with her long and the few men who had been assisting her were leaving her one by one. The Swami said: "This is nothing but a

mania. If one wants to do everything oneself, one loses one's entire energy in trifling details, and cannot maintain a cool head in the essentials. *Karma Yoga* is very difficult. One must have a cool brain, and very much of renuncia-

tion and dispassion. Otherwise work drags one down. One becomes truly entitled to work only after God-realisation. It is very difficult to work with women. They somehow want to dominate over you."

## BUILDERS OF UNITY\*

By ROMAIN ROLLAND

KESHAB CHUNDER SEN.

This man, short-lived, inconsistent, restless but at the same time inspired—he lived from 1833 to 1884,—was the chief personality to influence the Brahmo Samaj during the second-half of the nineteenth century. He enriched and renewed it to such an extent that its very existence was endangered.

He was the representative of a different class and generation much more deeply impregnated with Western influences. Instead of being a great aristocrat like Roy and Devendranath, he belonged to the liberal and distinguished middle class of Bengal, who were in constant intellectual touch with Europe. By profession he was a doctor. His grandfather, a remarkable man, the native Secretary of the Asiatic Society, had controlled the publication of all the editions of books published in Hindustani. He was left an orphan at an early age, and was brought up in an English school. It was this that made him so different from his two predecessors; for he never knew Sanskrit and very soon broke away from the popular form of the Hindu religion.<sup>1</sup> Christ

had touched him, and it was to be his mission in life to introduce him into the Brahmo Samaj, and into the heart of a group of the best minds in India. When he died *The Indian Christian Herald* said of him, "The Christian Church mourns the death of its greatest ally. Christians looked upon him as God's messenger, sent to awake India to the spirit of Christ. Thanks to him hatred of Christ died out."

This last statement is not quite correct; for we shall see to what point Keshab himself had to suffer as the champion of Christ. The real significance of his life has been obscured by most of the men who have spoken of him even in the Brahmo Samaj; for they were offended by the heresy of their chief and tried to hide it. He himself only revealed it by degrees, so that it is only through documents written as long as twenty years before his death that we learn from his own lips that his life had been influenced from his youth up by three great Christian visitants, John the Baptist, Christ and St. Paul.<sup>2</sup> Further in a serious confidential letter to his intimate

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<sup>1</sup> It is only natural that in spite of this fact he never lost the religious temperament peculiar to his race. Pratap Chunder Mozoomdar in the course of a conversation in 1884 with Ramakrishna related the mystic childhood of Keshab. (*The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*). He was early "marked by non-attachment to the things of this world" and absorbed in inward concentration and

contemplation. "He was even subject to fits of loss of consciousness due to excess of devotion." He later applied the forms of Hindu religions "devotion" to non-Hindu religious objects. And the "Vaishnavited" form of Christianity he adopted was accompanied by a constant study of Yoga.

<sup>2</sup> Raster, 1879; Lecture: India Asks, Who is Christ?

" . . . My Christ, my sweet Christ, the brightest jewel of my heart, the necklace of my soul—for twenty years have I cherished Him in this my miserable heart."

disciple, Pratap Chunder Mozoomdar,<sup>1</sup> a letter of primary importance passed over in silence by non-Christian Brahmos, he shows us how he was waiting until the times were ripe to make public avowal of his faith in Christ. The double life Keshab led for so long, materially strengthened by the duality of his own character, seems to be compounded of the diverse and incompatible elements of the East and the West, which were in constant conflict the one with the other. Hence it is very difficult for the historian to make an impartial study; Hindu biographers, in nearly every case hotly partizan, have done nothing to make his task an easier one.

During the early days of admission to the Brahmo Samaj on the introduction of Devendranath Tagore's son, a fellow student at College, young Keshab was surrounded with love. He became the darling of Devendranath

January, 1879, Lecture: Am I an Inspired Prophet?

"Who has marked me as His own from my earliest childhood? Providence even then brought me into contact with three majestic figures, radiant with the divine. . . . They were among my first acquaintances. . . . The first, John the Baptist, walked the Indian deserts, saying, 'Repent ye, for the Kingdom of God is at hand.' . . . I fell at his feet. He passed by and another took his place, One still mightier—the prophet of Nazareth. 'Take no thought for the morrow.' He said. His words found an abiding place in my heart. Hardly had the echo of them died away when there came another prophet, the strong, valiant and heroic apostle Paul. . . And his words respecting chastity burned within me like a fire at a critical time of my life."

We must add that he had come to know the New Testament at the English College, for a chaplain used to read it to the young people, translating it from the Greek.

<sup>1</sup> In this letter, whereon the exact date does not appear, but which it is safe to assume was written to Mozoomdar directly after his famous lecture in 1866 on "Jesus Christ, Europe and Asia," Keshab explained himself thus:

" . . . I have my own ideas about Christ, but I am not bound to give them out in due form, until altered circumstances of the country gradually develop them out of my

and of the young members of the Brahmo Samaj, who felt themselves drawn more closely to him than to the noble Devendranath, dwelling in Olympian isolation in spite of himself as the result of his breeding and idealism.<sup>2</sup> Keshab had a social sense and wished to rouse the same feeling throughout India. A hyper-individualist himself by nature and doubtless just because this was the case,<sup>3</sup> he early in life recognised that part of the evils of his country arose out of this same hyper-individualism, and that India needed to acquire a new moral conscience. "Let all souls be socialised and realise their unity with the people, the visible

mind. Jesus is identical with self-sacrifice, and as He lived and preached in the fulness of time, so must He be in turn preached in the fulness of time. . . . I am, therefore, patiently waiting that I may grow with the age and the nation and the spirit of Christ's sacrifice may grow therewith." (Cf. Manilal C. Parekh: *op. cit.* pp. 29-31).

<sup>2</sup> "Devendranath was too preoccupied by his personal relationship to God to feel more than moderately the call of social responsibilities."—From a letter of a friend of the Tagores.

<sup>3</sup> His chief disciple, Pratap Chunder Mozoomdar, said that he constantly struggled against the flights of his mystic nature, and that "he always succeeded in containing them" (a fact which is not altogether true); "for the great object of his life was to bring religion within the reach of heads of families," in other words to re-establish it in ordinary everyday life. This was one of the sources of the contradictions in the character, which compromised his work. He attempted to reconcile the irreconcilable—the mystic upspringing natural to him, and the canalisation of the divine stream for the moral and social service of the community—Theocentrism and anthropocentrism, to use the language of Western mysticism as analysed by the Abbot Henri Brémond. Both of them, moreover, in the case of Keshab existed in the highest degree. But his rich nature, too plastic, too perpetually receptive to all spiritual foods offered for the satisfaction of his appetite, greater than his faculty for absorption, made him a living contradiction. It is said that while at college he played the part of Hamlet in a performance of that play of Shakespeare. In point of fact he remained the young Prince of Denmark to the end of his life.

community." This conception, uniting<sup>1</sup> the aristocratic unitarianism of Roy to the Indian masses, put young Keshab into fellowship with the most ardent aspirations of the rising generation. Just as Vivekananda in after days (Vivekananda incidentally owed him a great deal without perhaps realising it ; for ideas are the natural outcome of an age so that the same ideas are born at the same time in different minds), Keshab believed religion to be necessary for the regeneration of the race. In an address at Bombay in 1868 he maintained that he wished to make it "the basis of social reforms." Hence religious reform within the Brahmo Samaj was to bear fruit in action. The active and daring hand of Keshab was therefore to be seen casting a handful of fruitful seeds into the soil of India, which in turn were to throw Vivekananda<sup>2</sup> upon a country already awakened by the thunder of his words.

But Keshab came before his time. Some of his reforms even came up against the traditional spirit of the Brahmo Samaj. It has been generally considered that the stumbling block between him and Devendranath was the question of intercaste marriages, but I am certain that there were others far more important. Their mutual affection has drawn a veil over the causes of their separation, but from what happened immediately afterwards, they can be

<sup>1</sup> In theory at least. In practice Keshab never succeeded in touching the masses. His thought was too impregnated with elements alien to the thought of India.

<sup>2</sup> A great many social institutions were eventually founded by Keshab for the service of the people :—Night Schools, Industrial Schools, the Calcutta College, the Normal School for Indian Women, a society for the help of women, the Indian Association of Reform, the Fraternity of Goodwill, numerous Samajas, etc.

<sup>3</sup> B. Mozoonidar said, "The Brahmo Samaj of Devendranath was in theory eclectic, but in fact purely Hindu in character." My friend, Prof. Kalidas Nag, who is connected with the Tagores by ties of affection, wrote to me, "Devendranath could not bear radical changes. He rendered full

surmised. However open Devendranath's mind might be to the great ideal of constructing the harmony of humanity through the Brahmo Samaj, he remained deeply attached to Indian tradition and her sacred writings.<sup>3</sup> He could not be blind to the Christianity working in the mind of his favourite disciple, and at whatever personal cost, he could no longer remain in association with a coadjutor who based his teachings on the New Testament.

In 1868 the fatal rupture took place, and there was a schism in the Brahmo Samaj. Devendranath kept the direction of the Adi Brahmo Samaj [the first Brahmo Samaj]<sup>4</sup> and Keshab departed to found the Brahmo Samaj of India. For both men this was a severe trial, but especially for Keshab, whose heresy made him hated. At first he did not foresee this contingency. Strong in his popularity and the ardent support of his faithful friends, three months after the break he made a public declaration in his famous lecture on *Jesus Christ, Europe and Asia*.<sup>5</sup> There he professed Christ, but an Asiatic Christ little understood by Europe—"all the grandeur of which the Asiatic nature is susceptible." Moreover his Christianity was still in the main a question of ethics. Keshab was attracted by the morality of Christ and his two principles

justice to the West, and highly appreciated Fénelon, Fichte and Victor Cousin. But he could not tolerate aggressive demonstrations of fanatical zeal. Keshab was a zealot, who wished to lead his disciples in a veritable crusade against India's social evils."

<sup>4</sup> It was not long before Devendranath retired from active life. He went to live in a self-chosen retreat at Bolpur, near Calcutta, to which he gave the name of Shantiniketan, the Abode of Peace. There he spent the rest of his life in an atmosphere of aristocratic sanctity and died in 1905, a patriarch in the midst of many of his royal posterity.

<sup>5</sup> It is obvious that Devendranath knew of this imminent confession of faith when he separated from Keshab. At that time Keshab was deep in the study of Christianity, and in particular occupied in reading a book which had a great vogue in that day—Seeley's *Ecce Homo*



of pardon and self-sacrifice. Through these principles and through him he maintained that "Europe and Asia may learn to find harmony and unity."

His ardour as a neophyte was such that he made his friends call him Jesudās, or the servant of Jesus, and he celebrated Christmas by a fast within a small circle of intimate friends.

But the lecture had created a scandal, and Keshab did not improve matters by a second speech upon *Great Men* (1866).<sup>1</sup> Therein, if I may use such an expression, he made Jesus come into line among the messengers of God, each charged with his own special message, and each to be accepted without special attachment to any single one. He threw open his Church to men of all countries and all ages, and introduced for the first time extracts from the Bible, the Koran, the Zend Avesta<sup>2</sup> into the manual of devotional lessons for the Brahmo Samaj. But far from dying down, feeling ran higher.

Keshab was not the man to be insensible to it. His sensitive and defenceless heart suffered more than most from disaffection. Public misunderstanding, the desertion of his companions, heavy material difficulties, and over and above all the torments of his own conscience, perhaps even doubts as to his mission added to "a very lively sense of weakness, of sin and of repentance" peculiarly his own as distinct from most of the other religious spirits

<sup>1</sup> It is perhaps worthy of notice that among the youthful readings of Keshab none impressed him more than the works of Carlyle and Emerson.

<sup>2</sup> This manual, called the *Sloka-sangraha*, (1866), though a great deal larger than Devendranath's, never had such a wide circulation in India as the *Brahmo Dharma*. Nevertheless Keshab followed the true tradition of Roy when he said that "the harmony of religions was the real mission of the Brahmo Samaj."

<sup>3</sup> It is P. C. Mozoomdar who has noticed in him this "sense of sin" so curiously at variance to the spirit of Devendranath as well as Ramakrishna and above all of Vivekananda. We shall see later that Vivekananda denounced it as evidence of a weak disposition, of a real mental malady, for which he

of Hinduism,<sup>3</sup> resulted in a devastating crisis of soul, which lasted throughout 1867. He was alone with his grief, without any outside help, alone with God. But God spoke to him, so that the religious experience of that year with the emotions that racked him, as he officiated as divine priest daily by himself in his house, led to a complete transformation not only in his ideas but in their expression. Up till then he had been the chief among religious intellectuals, a moralist, a stranger to sentimental effusions, which had been repellent to him; but now he was flooded by a torrent of emotion—love and tears—and gave himself up to it in rapture.

This was the dawn of a new era for the Brahmo Samaj. The mysticism of the great Bhakta, Chitanya, and of the Sankirtans was introduced within its walls. From morning till night there were prayers and hymns accompanied by Vaishnavite musical instruments, and feasts of God;<sup>4</sup> and Keshab officiated all the time, his face bathed in tears—he, who, it was said, had never wept. The wave of emotion spread. Keshab's sincerity, his spirit of universal comprehension and his care for the public weal brought him the sympathy alike of the best minds of India and England, including the Viceroy. His journey to England in 1870 was a triumphal progress. The enthusiasm he raised was equal to that inspired by Kossuth. During his six months' stay<sup>5</sup> he

threw the blame on Christianity. The state of mind that Keshab systematically cultivated culminated in a sermon delivered in 1881: *We Apostles of the New Dispensation*, where he likened himself to Judas to the scandal of his hearers.

<sup>4</sup> It is noticeable that on this occasion there was no question of Christ. The Bhakti of Chaitanya is another aspect of Keshab's religion. "Thus," wrote P. C. Mozoomdar, "Keshab stood at the threshold of his independent career with the shadow of Jesus on the one hand, and the shadow of Chaitanya on the other."

<sup>5</sup> He came to know Gladstone, Stuart Mill, Max Müller, Francis Newman, Dean Stanley, etc. personally.

addressed seventy meetings of 40,000 persons and fascinated his audiences by the simplicity of his English and by his musical voice. He was compared to Gladstone. He was greeted as the spiritual ally of the West, the Evangelist of Christ in the East. In all good faith both parties laboured under delusions, which were to be dissipated during the following years, not without a naive deception of the English. For Keshab remained deeply Indian at heart and was not to be enrolled in the ranks of European Christianity. On the other hand, he thought he could enrol it. India and the Brahmo Samaj profited from the good disposition of the Government.<sup>1</sup> The reformed Brahmo Samaj spread in all directions, to Simla, Bombay, Lahore, Lucknow, Monghyr, etc. A mission tour undertaken by Keshab across India in 1873 with the object of bringing about unity among the brothers and sisters of the new faith, a tour which was the forerunner of the great voyage of exploration undertaken twenty years afterwards by Vivekananda in the guise of a wandering Sannyâsin. The tour opened up new horizons and he believed that he had found the key to the popular polytheism, so repugnant to the Brahmo Samaj, and that he could make an alliance between it and pure theism. But to this union, realised spontaneously by Ramakrishna at the same time, Keshab brought a spirit of intellectual compromise. He was obliged to convince himself (he failed to convince the polytheists) that their gods were at bottom nothing but the names of different attributes of the one God.

"Their (Hindu) idolatry," he wrote in *The Sunday Mirror*,<sup>2</sup> "is nothing but the worship of a divine attribute materialised. If the material shape is given up, what remains is a beautiful allegory. . . . We have found out that

every idol worshipped by the Hindu represents an attribute of God, and that each attribute is called by a peculiar name. The believer in the New Dispensation is required to worship God as the possessor of all those attributes, represented by the Hindu as innumerable, or three hundred and thirty millions. To believe in an undivided Deity, without reference to the aspects of His nature is to believe in an abstract God, and it would lead us to practical rationalism and infidelity. If we are to worship Him in all His manifestations, we shall name one attribute Lakshmi, another Saraswati, another Mahadeva, etc., etc. . . ."

This meant a great step forward in religious intercourse leading to the inclusion of the greater part of mankind. But it never came to anything because Keshab intended that his theism should have all the real power and accorded to polytheism nothing but outward honour. On the other hand, he avoided Advaitism, absolute Monism, which has always been forbidden to the Brahmo. The result was that religious reason sat on the fence separating the two camps of the two extreme faiths. The prevailing situation was not an exact equilibrium of rest and the position in which Keshab insisted on placing himself could not be a permanent one. For he believed that he was called by God to dictate His new revealed law, the New Dispensation, from thence. He began to proclaim it in 1875,<sup>3</sup> the year when his relations with Ramakrishna began.

Like so many self-appointed legislators, he found it difficult to establish law and order in his own mind, especially as he wished his legislation to be all-embracing and to include Christ and Brahman, the Gospels and Yoga, religion and reason. Ramakrishna reached the same point with great

<sup>1</sup> Especially for several reforms, among them a legislative one directly affecting the Brahmo Samaj—the legal recognition of Brahmo marriages.

<sup>2</sup> August 1, 1880: The Philosophy of Idol-worship.

<sup>3</sup> In the Lecture: Behold the Light of Heaven in India.

simplicity through his heart, and made no attempt to enclose his discovery within a body of doctrine and precept; he was content to show the way, to set the example, to give the impetus. Keshab adopted the methods of an intellectual European at the head of a school of comparative religion, together with the methods of inspired persons of India and America,—Bhakti in tears, Revivals and public confessions.

He gave to each of his favourite disciples a different form of religion to study<sup>1</sup> and Yoga to practise<sup>2</sup> showing his skill as a teacher by giving each disciple the one best adapted to his individual character. He himself oscillated between two advisors, both equally dear to him—the living example of Ramakrishna to whom he went for guidance in ecstasy, and the guidance of the Christian faith as practised by an Anglican monk, who later became a Roman Catholic, Luke Rivington. Moreover he could never choose between the life of God and the life of the world, and with disarming sincerity he maintained that the one was not necessarily harmful to the other.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Each of his four chosen disciples dedicated himself to a lifelong study of one of the four great religions, and in some cases was absorbed into the subject of his study: Upadhyaya Gour Govindo Roy was given Hinduism and produced a monumental work, a Sanskrit commentary on the Gita and a life of Sri Krishna; Sadhu Aghore Nath studied Buddhism, and wrote a life of Buddha in Bengali, following himself in his footsteps until he was cut off in the prime of a saintly life: Bhai Girish Chunder Sen devoted himself to Islam, translated the Koran and wrote a life of Mahomet and several other works in Arabic and Persian. Lastly Pratap Chunder Mozoomdar studied Christianity and published a book called *The Oriental Christ*. He was so impregnated with its spiritual atmosphere that from the school of thought founded by him sprang real Indian Christians such as Manilal C. Parekh.

<sup>2</sup> After January 1, 1875, when he inaugurated the new method of spiritual development usually called the Dispensation, he varied the paths of the soul (*Yogas*) according to the character of his disciples, recommending Bhakti to some, *Jñāna* to others, Rāja to others. The different

But his opinions wronged him and therefore reacted on the Brahmo Samaj, all the more because he was a man “of the most transparent sincerity,”<sup>4</sup> who neglected to take the most elementary precautions to conceal the changeableness and heterogeneity of his nature. The result was that in 1878 a new schism took place in the Brahmo Samaj and Keshab found himself the butt of violent attacks from his own people, who accused him of having betrayed his principles.<sup>5</sup> The majority of his friends deserted him and so he fell fatally into the hands of the few faithful ones—Ramakrishna and Father Luke Rivington. Moreover this new trial reopened the door to a whole flood of professions of the Christian faith, which became more and more explicit and in accordance with the deepest metaphysics of Christianity. Thus in the lecture *Am I an Inspired Prophet?* (January, 1879), he described his childish visions of John the Baptist, Christ and St. Paul; in *India Asks, Who is Christ?* (Easter, 1879), he announced to India the coming of “the Bridegroom . . . my Christ, my sweet

forms of devotion were linked together by the different names or attributes of God. (Cf. P. C. Mozoomdar) I shall return to this point in my second volume when I study Hindu mysticism and the different kinds of Yoga.

<sup>4</sup> His well-wishers, such as Ramakrishna, did not fail to remark with a touch of malice that this saintly man left his affairs in good order and a rich house, etc., when he died. Keshab did not renounce the pleasures of society—he took an active part in amusements and acted in the dramas played in his house. (Cf. *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, April, 1884). But Ramakrishna never doubted his sincerity. It was unimpeachable. He only regretted that such a religious and gifted man should remain half way to God instead of giving himself entirely to Him.

<sup>5</sup> Promotho Loll Sen: *op. cit.*

<sup>6</sup> The occasion was a domestic one, the marriage of his daughter before the age established by the law of the Brahmo Samaj to a Maharaja. But here again, as in the schism with Devendranath, the real cause was hidden. A third Brahmo Samaj was founded, the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj, more narrow and definitely anti-Christian.

Christ, born of God and man . . . ;” and in *Does God Manifest Himself Alone?* he showed the Son sitting at the right hand of the Father.

All these pronouncements, however, did not hinder him from dictating at the same time from the heights of the Himalayas his famous Epistle to Indian Brethren (1880) for the jubilee of the Brahmo Samaj, announcing in a pontifical tone “Urbi et Orbi,”<sup>2</sup> the Message entrusted to him by God, the New Dispensation. It is almost possible to believe that the words are the words of the Bible :

“Hearken, Oh Hindustan, the Lord your God is one.” So begins the Epistle to the Indian Brethren.

“Jehovah the great Spirit, whose clouds thunder ‘I am,’ whom the heavens and the earth declare.” (*ibid.*)

“I write this epistle to you, dear and beloved friends, in the spirit and after the manner of St. Paul, however unworthy I am of his honoured Master . . . .” (*ibid.*)

But he adds,

“Paul wrote full of faith in Christ. As a theist I write this, my humble epistle at the feet, not of one prophet only, but of all the prophets in heaven and earth, living or dead. . . .”

For he claimed to be the fulfilment of Christ the forerunner.

“The New Dispensation is the prophecy of Christ fulfilled . . The Omnipotent speaks to-day to our country as formerly he did to other nations. . . .”<sup>3</sup>

At this moment he even believed that he was formed of the same element as the Spirit of God.

<sup>1</sup> “My Master Jesus. . . . Young men of India. . . . Believe and remember. . He will come to you as self-surrender, as ascetism, as Yoga. . . The Bridegroom cometh. . . . Let India, beloved India, be dressed in all her jewellery.”

Again Keshab commented in his articles in *The Indian Mirror*, “What the Brahmo Samaj did to clear the moral character of Christ more than twelve years ago, it does with respect to His divinity at the present day.” (April 20, 1879). There were no half measures about this, Christ was God.

“The Spirit of God and my inner self are knit together. If you have seen me, you have seen him. . . .”

What then does the Omnipotent, whose voice he is, have to declare? What “new Love, new Hope, new Joy does He bring?” “How sweet is this new Evangel!”

This is what Jehovah as God of India dictates to the new Moses :

“The infinite Spirit, whom no eye hath seen, and no ear hath heard, is your God, and you should have none other God. There are two false gods, raised by men of India in opposition to the All Highest—the Divinity which ignorant hands have fashioned, and the Divinity which the vain dreams of intellectuals have imagined are alike the enemy of our Lord.<sup>4</sup> You must abjure them both . . . . Do not adore either dead matter, or dead men, or dead abstractions. . . Adore the living Spirit, who sees without eyes. . . . The Communion of the soul with God and with the departed saints shall be your true heaven, and you must have none other. . . . In the spiritual exaltation of the soul find the joy and the holiness of heaven. . . Your heaven is not far away ; it is within you. You must honour and love all the ancients of the human family—prophets, saints, martyrs sages, apostles, missionaries, philanthropists of all ages and all countries without caste prejudice. Let not the

And again, “The Mosaic dispensation only? Perhaps the Hindu dispensation also. In India He will fulfil the Hindu dispensation.”

<sup>2</sup> *Urbi et Orbi* :—that is to say, the City (Rome) and the world (like the Roman Pope).

<sup>3</sup> Cf. sermon : “Behold the Light of Heaven in India.” (1875).

<sup>4</sup> The first Divinity condemned is easy to define, the idols of wood, metal and stone. The second is further defined by “the unseen idols of modern scepticism, abstractions, unconscious evolution, blind protoplasm, etc.” This then is scientific or rational or Advaitist intellectualism. But Keshab was far from condemning real science, as is shown by his lecture on the Vision of God in the XIXth Century. (1879).

holy men of India monopolise your affection and your homage! Render to all prophets the devotion and universal affection that is their due. . . . Every good and great man is the personification of some special element of Truth and Divine Goodness. Sit humbly at the feet of all heavenly messengers. . . . Let their blood be your blood, their flesh your flesh! . . . Live in them and they will live in you for ever!"

Nothing more noble can be imagined. This is the very highest expression of universal theism; and it comes very close to the free theism of Europe without any forced act of allegiance to revealed religion. It opens its arms to all the purified spirits of the whole earth, past, present and future; for the Gospel of Keshab does not claim to be the final word of the revelation. "The Indian Scriptures are not closed.<sup>1</sup> New chapters are added every year. . . . Go ever farther in the love and the knowledge of God! . . . . What the Lord will reveal to us in ten years' time who can say, except Himself?"

But how is this free and broad theism with its serene and assured tone to be reconciled to his abasement at the feet of Christ in the previous year?<sup>2</sup>

"I must tell you . . . that I am connected with Jesus' Gospel, and occupy a prominent place in it. I am the prodigal son of whom Christ spoke and I am trying to return to my Father in a penitent spirit. Nay, I will say more for the satisfaction and edification of my opponents. . . . I am Judas, that vile man who betrayed Jesus, the veritable Judas who sinned against Jesus and the truth lodges in my heart! . . ."

The overwhelming effect of such a public confession on those members of the Brahmo Samaj, who had followed

<sup>1</sup> A favourite idea of Vivekananda may be recognised therein.

<sup>2</sup> In the sermon: *We, the Apostles of the New Dispensation*. (1881).

<sup>3</sup> That is why their writings about Keshab are very careful (as far as I know) to make no mention of such an avowal.

<sup>4</sup> "Honour Christ but never be 'Christian' in the popular acceptance of the term. . .

their chief up to that point,<sup>3</sup> may be imagined.

But Keshab was still debating with himself. He professed Christ but he denied that he was a "Christian."<sup>4</sup> In a strange way he tried to unite Christ to Socrates and to Chaitanya by thinking of each of them as a part of his body or of his mind.<sup>5</sup> All the same he instituted the sacramental ceremonies of Christianity in his Samaj, adapting them to Indian usage. On March 6, 1881 he celebrated the Blessed Sacrament with rice and water instead of bread and wine,<sup>6</sup> and three months later the sacrament of baptism, wherein Keshab himself set the example to the glory of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.

Finally in 1882 he took the decisive step. The Christian Trinity of all Christian mysteries has always been the greatest stumbling-block for Asia, and an object of repulsion or derision.<sup>7</sup> Christ is not Christianity. . . . Let it be your ambition to outgrow the popular types of narrow Christian faith and merge in the vastness of Christ!"

In an article of the same period called "Other Sheep Have I."

"We belong to no Christian sect. We disclaim the Christian name. Did the immediate disciples of Christ call themselves Christian? . . . Whoso believes in God and accepts Christ as the Son of God has fellowship with Christ in the Lord. . . . How explicit is that well-known passage—'An other sheep I have.' The shepherd knows us. Christ has found us and accepted us. . . . That is enough. Is any Christian greater than Christ?"

<sup>5</sup> "The Lord Jesus is my will, Socrates my head, Chaitanya my heart, the Hindu Rishi my soul and the philanthropic Howard my right hand."

<sup>6</sup> Keshab read a verse from St. Luke, and he prayed "that the Holy Spirit might turn their grossly material substance into sanctifying spiritual forces that they may upon entering our system be assimilated to it as the flesh and blood of all the saints in Christ Jesus."

<sup>7</sup> The reason for this is obscure as regards Vedantic India; for she also has her Trinity, and Keshab rightly made it approach the Christian Trinity:—"Sat, Chit, Ananda" (Being, Knowledge, Happiness, which Keshab translated by Truth, Wisdom and Joy) the three in one: Satchidānanda.

Keshab not only accepted and adopted it, but extolled it with gladness<sup>1</sup> and was enlightened by it. This mystery seemed to him, and certainly not without reason, to be the keystone of the arch of Christian metaphysics, the supreme conception of the universe . . . "the treasury in which lies the accumulated wealth of the world's sacred literature—all that is precious in philosophy, theology, and poetry (of all humanity) . . . the loftiest expression of the world's religious consciousness. . ." He defines the three Persons very exactly, I believe, from an orthodox point of view.<sup>2</sup> Did anything still separate him from Christianity?

Only one thing but it was a world in itself—his own message, the Indian Dispensation. He could never bring himself to renounce it. He indeed adopted Christ, but Christ in his turn had to adopt India and the theism of Keshab. "Begone, idolatry! Preachers of idol-worship, adieu!" (This apostrophe was addressed to the West). Christ is the eternal Word. "As the sleeping Logos did Christ live potentially in the Father's bosom, long, long before he came into this world of ours." He appeared before his physical life in Greece and Rome, in Egypt and in India, in the poets of the Rig-Veda, as well as in Confucius and Sakya-Muni; and the role of this Indian apostle of the New Dispensation was to proclaim

his true and universal meaning. For after the Son came the Spirit and "this Church of the New Dispensation . . . is altogether an institution of the Holy Spirit" and completes the Old and the New Testaments.

And so no part of Himalayan theism was lost in spite of the rude shocks from above and below, which might well have undermined its citadel. By a violent effort of thought, Keshab achieved the incorporation of Christ within it, and covered his own New Dispensation with the name of Christ, believing that he was called to reveal the real meaning of Christ to Western Christianity.

This was the avowed object of Keshab's last message before his death, *Asia's Message to Europe* (1883). "Sectarian and carnal Europe, put up into the scabbard the sword of your narrow faith! Abjure it and join the true Catholic and Universal Church in the name of Christ the Son of God! . . ."

"Christian Europe has not understood one half of Christ's words. She has comprehended that Christ and God are one, but not that Christ and humanity are one. That is the great mystery, which the New Dispensation reveals to the world: not only the reconciliation of Man with God; but the reconciliation of man with man! . . . Asia says to Europe, 'Sister, Be one in Christ! . . . All that is good and true and beautiful the meekness of Hindu Asia, the

<sup>1</sup> In a lecture of 1882: *That Marvellous Mystery, the Trinity*.

<sup>2</sup> "Here you have the complete triangular figure of the Trinity. . . The apex is the very God Jehova. . . From Him comes down the Son. . . and touches one end of the base of the humanity. . . and then by the power of the Holy Ghost drags up degenerate humanity to Himself. Divinity coming down to humanity is the Son, Divinity carrying humanity to heaven is the Holy Ghost; this is the whole philosophy of salvation. . . The Creator, the Exemplar, and the Sanctifier, I am, I love, I save; the Still God, the Journeying God, the Returning God. . . ." —*Keshab*. Cf. the treatises of classical Catholic mysticism.

the Son is well explained by the term issuing or coming out. . . *Exivi a Patre*. The Holy Spirit is produced by the return way. . . It is the divine way and subsists in God whereby God returns to Himself. . . In the same way we come out of God by the Creation, which is attributed to the Father by the Son; we return to Him by grace, which is the attribute of the Holy Spirit."

(P. Claude Sequenot: *Conduite d'Oraison*. 1634, quoted by Henri Brémond: *La Métaphysique des Saints*. I. pp. 116-117.)

Surprising though it may seem, Keshab knew the Bernullian or Salesian philosophy of prayer. In a note of June 30, 1881, on the renunciation of John the Baptist, he quotes letters of François de Sales to Madame

"The action whereby the Father engenders de Chantal.

truthfulness of the Mussulman and the charity of the Buddhist—all that is holy is of Christ. . . .”

And the new Pope of the new Rome in Asia intones the beautiful Song of Atonement.<sup>1</sup>

But he was indeed a pope, and the unity of reconciled mankind had to be according to his doctrine; in order to defend it he always kept the thunderbolt in his hand, and he would make no compromise upon the unitheistic principle—the Unity of God.

“Science is one. The Church is one.”

His disciple, B. Mozoomdar, makes him use the denunciatory words of Christ, but more violently.

“There is only one Way. There is no backdoor into heaven. He who enters not by the front door is a thief and a robber.”

This is the antithesis of the smiling words of kindness uttered by Ramakrishna.<sup>2</sup>

The innate need of unitarian discipline does not tally with religious universalism, and is often unwittingly confounded with spiritual imperialism. It led Keshab at the end of his life to lay down the Code of the New Samhita<sup>3</sup> (September 2, 1883), containing what he calls “the national law of the Aryans of the New Church in India . . . God’s moral law adapted to the peculiar needs and character of reformed Hindus, and based upon their national instincts and traditions.” It contains in effect a national unitarianism

—one God, one scripture, one baptism, one marriage—a whole code of injunctions for the family, for the home, for business, for study, for amusement, for charity, for relationships, etc. But his code is a purely abstract one for an India that had not yet come into existence, and whose advent is doubtful.

Was he himself sure that it would ever come? The entire edifice of voluntary reason rested on uncertain foundations, on a nature that could be shared by the East and the West. When illness came<sup>4</sup> the cement was loosened. To whom was his soul to belong, Christ or Kālī? On his death-bed Ramakrishna, Devendranath his old master to whom he was now reconciled, and the Bishop of Calcutta all visited him. On January 1, 1884 he went out for the last time to consecrate a new sanctuary to the Divine Mother, but on January 8 his death-bed was enveloped in the words of a hymn sung at his own request by one of his disciples about Christ’s agony in Gethsemane.

It was impossible for a nation of simple souls to recognise itself in such a constant mental oscillation. It makes Keshab nearer and more appealing to us, who can study his most intimate thoughts and can see the mental torture accompanying it. It is true, moreover, that the kind and penetrating vision of Ramakrishna understood better than anybody else the hidden tragedy of a being exhausting itself in searching after God, whose body was a prey of the unseen God.<sup>5</sup> But has a born

<sup>1</sup> “And the new Song of Atonement is sung with enthusiasm by millions of voices, representing all the various languages of the world, millions of souls, each dressed in its national garb of piety and righteousness, glowing in an infinite and complete variety of colours, shall dance round and round the Father’s throne, and peace and joy shall reign for ever.”

<sup>2</sup> One day when the young Naren (Vivekananda) denounced certain religious sects with his customary impatience, because their practices roused his furious disgust, Ramakrishna looked at him tenderly and said, “My boy, there is a backdoor to every house. Why should not one have the liberty to

enter into a house by that if one chooses to? But, of course, I agree with you that the front entrance is the best.”

And the biographer of Ramakrishna adds that these simple words “modified his Puritanical view of life, which he as a Brahmo had held. Sri Ramakrishna taught Naren how to regard mankind in the more generous and truer light of weakness and of strength (and not of sin or virtue).” (*Life of Vivekananda*, Vol. I, Chapter XLVII).

<sup>3</sup> Samhita—collection or miscellany.

<sup>4</sup> Diabetes, one of the scourges of Bengal, of which Vivekananda also died.

<sup>5</sup> I shall have more to say about the last touching visit of Ramakrishna to Keshab and

leader any right, even if he keeps his anguish to himself, to yield to such oscillations in his very last hours? They were his legacy to the Brahmo Samaj; and though they enriched its spirit they weakened its authority in India for a long time, if not for ever. We may well ask with Max Müller<sup>1</sup> whether the logical outcome of his theism was not to be found in Christianity; and that is exactly what Keshab's friends and enemies felt immediately after his death.

His obsequies united in common grief the official representatives of the best minds both of England and of Westernised India. "He was the chain of union between Europe and India;" and the chain once broken, could not be resoldered. None of the subsequent moral and religious leaders of India have so sincerely given their adherence to the heart and spirit of the thought and the God of the West.<sup>2</sup> Hence Max Müller could write, "India has lost her greatest son." But the Indian Press,

while unanimous in acclaiming his genius, was forced to admit that "the number of his disciples was not in accordance with his desert."<sup>3</sup>

He was in fact too far away from the deep-seated soul of his people. He wished to raise them all at once to the pure heights of his intellect, which had been itself nourished by the idealism and the Christ of Europe. In social matters none of his predecessors, with the exception of Roy, had done so much for her progress; but he ran counter to the rising tide of the national consciousness, then feverishly awakening. Against him were the three hundred million gods of India and the three hundred million living beings in whom they were incarnate—the whole vast jungle of human dreams wherein his Western outlook made him lose the track and the scent. He invited them to lose themselves in his Indian Christ, but his invitation remained unanswered. They did not even seem to have heard it.

the profound words he poured out like balm on the hidden wounds of the dying man.

<sup>1</sup>Max Müller in 1900 asked Pratap Chunder Mozoomdar, who had taken Keshab's place at the head of the Brahmo Samaj and who shared the "Christocentric" ideas of his master, why the Brahmo Samaj did not frankly adopt the name Christian and did not organise itself as a national Church of Christ. The idea found a response in P. C. Mozoomdar himself and a group of his young disciples. One of them, Brahmabandhav Upadhyaya, deserves a special study, for he has left a great memory. He passed from the Church of the New Dispensation to the Anglican and eventually to the Roman Catholic Communion. Another is Manilal C. Parekh, the biographer of Keshab, also a convert to Christianity. Both are convinced that if Keshab had lived several years longer he would have entered the Roman Church. Manilal Parekh says "that he was a Protestant in principle and a Catholic in

practice. . . Christian in spirit, inclining to Monatism (faith in the supremacy of the Holy Spirit)" For myself I believe that Keshab was one of those who would have remained at the threshold of the half open door. But it was fatal that his successors opened the door wide.

<sup>2</sup>*The Indian Empire* saluted in him "the best product of English education and Christian civilisation in India." And *The Hindu Patriot*, "the noble product of the education and the culture of the West."

From the Indian point of view such praise was its own condemnation.

<sup>3</sup>*The Hindu Patriot*. In 1921 the total number of the members of the three Brahmo Samajas was not more than 6,400 (of which 4,000 were in Bengal, Assam and Behar-Orissa), a minute number in comparison to the members of the Arya Samāj, of which I shall speak later, or of the new sect of pure mysticism, like the Rādhāsvāmī-Satsang.



# DECAY OF INDIGENOUS INDUSTRY

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## I

As we saw in a previous chapter, the industrial independence of India was maintained during the earlier years of British Rule. In fact, her industrial situation then was probably better than that of England. Calicoes had long been exported from India before they could be manufactured in England. English cloth had to be sent to Holland to be bleached or dyed, while dyeing was a flourishing industry in India. The silk-trade of England had to be protected in 1765 by the exclusion of the French silk from English markets. The English were indebted for the finer varieties of linen to Germany and Belgium, while India manufactured muslins of such exquisite fineness, that a piece could be made fifteen yards wide, weighing only 900 grains. England imported nearly two-thirds of the iron and much of the salt, earthenware, etc., used by her.

But since the middle of the last century, the economic position of India has undergone a most deplorable change. Her indigenous industrial fabric has been shattered, and she has been reduced from the economically sound position of industrial independence to the very unsound one of industrial servitude, and from that of one of the wealthiest countries of the world to one of its poorest.

One of the most important causes of this industrial decadence was the Industrial Revolution in Europe due to the introduction of labour-saving machinery. While Europe was being industrially modernised, India remained in the old-world condition. She was too far from Europe to feel the quickening impulse of progress which transformed that continent; and centuries of slow evolution had given the social structure of the Hindus a rigidity which unfitted it for the ready reception of a sudden impulse.

And the marvellous quickness and suddenness of the Industrial Revolution did not give the Indians any time to adapt themselves to the new order of things. English manufactures poured in, like an avalanche, and swept the indigenous industries before them. The day of manual skill, in which the Indian artisans excelled, was over. Hand-made manufactures could no longer compete with machine-made manufactures. Indian artisans had neither the time nor the education to assimilate the mechanical skill of modern Europe. It was not to be expected that illiterate weavers, or illiterate dyers, or illiterate miners would apply the scientific methods of modern industries to their occupations. If India had her own way, she would probably have protected her industries as most civilized countries protect theirs at the present day. But India could not have her own way; a protective tariff by a British Government against British manufactures was not to be thought of.

Thus the first effect of the industrial expansion of England was the ruin of the artisan population of India. The introduction of the power-loom at first caused great distress among the weavers of England also. They invoked the help of Parliament. "They begged to be sent to Canada. They proposed that the terrible power-loom should be restrained by law; and when that was denied them, they rose in their despair and lawlessly overthrew the machines which were devouring the bread of their children."\* But, the distress of the English weavers was only temporary. They soon had a share in the wealth created by the expansion of the cotton industry. It was not till the middle of the nineteenth century that the mechanical skill of modern Europe was transported to India, and the mills and

\*"The Nineteenth Century" by R. Mackenzie (1892), p. 72.

factories on modern methods found employment for a small fraction of the artisans who were thrown out of work by the importation of the English manufactures. But the great majority of the displaced artisans have been thrown upon agriculture for subsistence.

Besides the absence of a protective tariff the construction of railways which has been going on apace since the middle of the last century has by facilitating the transport of imported goods proved an important cause of the decadence of indigenous industry. It is true, the railways have developed the export trade in raw produce. But the cultivator, if he gains at all, does not gain to the extent it is generally supposed. The yield from his land has not been sensibly affected by the railways. It is the same now as it was in pre-railway times or even less. He unquestionably gets better prices for his crops. But a portion of the increased profits is consumed in enhanced rent. A portion also goes to pay enhanced wages for labourers, though unfortunately the enhancement is not in the same proportion as that of the prices of food grains. The profits which he has left after meeting these charges may be considered to be the equivalent only of the grain he would have stored, had not the introduction of railways offered him tempting prices to sell it. Whether he is any gainer for having cash instead of a store of grain is a very doubtful point, especially when we consider that the temptation to spend money where one has it in hand, upon festivities and upon various imported articles which the railway has brought to his doors and which mostly partake of the nature of inutilities, futilities and fatuities, is very great. The danger of these articles consists in their attractiveness and comparative cheapness. The cultivator and his family probably make a better show of respectability than they ever did before. But when famine threatens they find they have little money and no store of grain to fall back upon. And

famines have become more frequent of late than ever before.\*

True the railways have facilitated the transport of food to famine-stricken districts. But they have also resulted in conditions which are favourable to famines. In the first place, they have by facilitating the transport of imported goods helped to destroy indigenous industries. The artisans whom these industries afforded occupation have been yearly swelling the number of needy peasants and labourers. No doubt some of them have found employment in the railway workshops, and many more find work in the mines, factories and plantations which the railways have helped to develop. But their number is very small, just a little over two millions. Besides, as the largest and most important of the new industries with but few exceptions are owned and managed by foreigners, their profits swell the economic drain from India which leads to her impoverishment. The great majority of the displaced artisans have been driven to be labourers or agriculturists. Large towns with urban populations have dwindled into inconsiderable villages. The increase of agricultural at the sacrifice of artisan population is certainly not advantageous for India. There can be no doubt that a great portion of her wealth depended upon her manufacturing industries, as indeed the wealth of every country must do. Down to the early years of the last century she did not export her food grains, but cotton, silk and various other manufactures. It was especially to participate in the trade of these manufactures that the Portuguese, the Dutch, the French and the English came to India.

Then, again, the railways have contributed to the impoverishment of India as she has long had to remit to England a large amount as interests for them. As has been observed by H. J. S. Cotton, "the country is too poor to pay for its elaborate railway system . . . and

\*Digby's "Prosperous British India," pp. 130-131.

being compelled to borrow in England, has incurred an ever-accumulating debt at what has unfortunately proved to be an ever-increasing rate of interest."\* Moreover, what with the obstruction to drainage caused by the embankments of railways and their feeder roads in many parts of the country, notably in Bengal, and the pestilential pools choked with weeds on either side of them, they have been the main cause of the fulminant type of malaria which has prevailed since their construction.† The evil effects of Malaria in Bengal are summed up in the Census Report of 1911 :

"Year by year fever is silently at work. Plague slays its thousands, fever its ten thousands. Not only does it diminish the population by death, but it reduces the vitality of the survivors, saps their vigour and fecundity, and either interrupts the even tenour, or hinders the development of commerce and industry. A leading cause of poverty—and of many other disagreeables in a great part of Bengal—is the prevalence of malaria. For a physical explanation of the Bengali lack of energy malaria would count high."

Thus the railway has directly and indirectly contributed to the decay of indigenous industry.

## II

The present system of Education on Western lines is to be placed in the same category as the railway. It has most dexterously forged links for the ever-lengthening chain of India's industrial bondage. Yet, the press and platform of New India rend the skies with cries for its extension and the expansion of a department which may more appropriately be called nation-destroying than nation-building. As was predicted by Macaulay, it has tended to approximate our style of living to the English standard. This "elevation" (as it is euphemistically called) is an undoubted

fact and is noticeable more or less among nearly all classes of the community especially in the vicinity of railways. It consists of :

(1) The substitution of the finer and cheaper mill-made, especially imported, fabrics for the coarser and dearer, though much more substantial and durable, hand-made clothes, and the more plentiful use of the former in the form of shirts, coats, etc. ; of expensive exotic games for inexpensive indigenous games ; of cigarette for *hooka* smoking ; of imported China glass and enamelled ware for indigenous metallic crockery etc., fine shoes for coarse sandals, sugar for *gur*, bottled and tinned medicines and foods, for indigenous simples and fresh foods ; and of strong liquor for home-brewed ale, and its increased consumption.

(2) The acquisition of such habits as tea-drinking and of a taste for expensive musical instruments, such as harmonium, gramophone, etc., and for urban amusements, such as theatres, cinemas, etc.

The quantity of clothing now needed in a household is treble, quadruple or more of what would have been sufficient a generation or two ago. All the members of a middle class family, male and female, infant and adult, must be draped in the various appendages of Western habiliment in conformity with Western fashion as far as possible. Bare legs and bare body would shock the current ideas of decency and aesthetics. The feet must be shod with boots and shoes of Western shape and style which are much more expensive and much less durable than those of indigenous make which were formerly in vogue. Cheap native toys no longer amuse our children. Our young men no longer find pleasure in native games and athletic exercises which cost nothing, but must have football, tennis, badminton, cricket, billiards, etc., which cost a great deal. Indigenous entertainments and amusements for which the great majority had to pay nothing have

\*"New India," p. 61.

†"Survival of Hindu Civilization," Part 2. "Physical Degeneration, its Causes and Remedies," pp. 21—26.

been superseded by theatres, circuses, cinemas, etc., which everybody must pay for. Housekeeping in the old style which utilised the resources of the country to the fullest possible advantage, recognised the tending of the cow as one of its most important duties, and turned out delicacies and artistic utilities out of inexpensive things, is a vanishing art in New India. The auditory nerve of the Neo-Indian responds less and less to the notes of indigenous musical instruments, and they are being replaced by the harmonium, and latterly also, to some extent at least, by the gramophone. His tongue is becoming more and more insensible to the taste of Indian dainties, and must have a variety of tinned and bottled foods, solid and liquid. His eyes refuse more and more to be satisfied unless his house is furnished and decorated in the Western fashion, and his grounds laid out with exotic flowers. And his olfactory nerve is becoming more and more obtuse to any fragrance but that of perfumes either genuinely foreign or foreign in native guise. He is giving the go-by to simple indigenous remedies, and apothecary shops whose number in large cities is legion, can hardly keep pace with his ailments and are making deplorable inroads into his purse,—shops in regard to which an eminent medical authority has declared that "the world would be better off if the contents were emptied into the sea though the consequence to the fishes would be lamentable," and that too in the West where the drugs are available in much fresher condition.

This approximation to the European style of living can hardly be called "elevation." In many, I may say most, respects, the change is decidedly for the worse. In a climate where minimum of clothing, conformably to the indigenous standard of decency, is conducive to health for the greater portion of the year, covering oneself up from head to foot after the European style cannot but be prejudicial to health. The same remark applies generally to the change of taste in regard to eating, drinking

and smoking, especially in regard to the alarming spread of tea-drinking and of cigarette-smoking.

But whether "elevation" or not, whether for good or for bad, the approximation of the standard of living of one of the poorest communities of the world to that of one of the richest is suicidal. True a very small section of our community composed of some artisans, state servants, lawyers, etc., have more money than before. But they too are generally impoverished.

Impoverishment is a comparative term. If one, having comparatively more money than before, has yet less for his wants, he is certainly poorer. I do not think I am exaggerating when I say that the great majority of our middle class have been impoverished in this sense. The candle burns at both ends. Their resources are exhausted on the one hand by the inordinate enhancement of the prices of indigenous necessities, and on the other by the so-called "elevation" of the standard of living which is enlarging their wants. Even incomes which formerly would have been regarded as opulence are now hardly deemed to be bare competence. While milk and the various preparations of milk which form our principal articles of nutrition suited to the climate, have become so very dear that the great majority of our middle class cannot afford to get them in sufficient quantity for bare subsistence, they have to spend comparatively large sums upon the gratification of the new tastes which have sprung up for clothing, shoes, socks, etc., and for amusements and games, such as theatrical performances, circuses, cinemas, billiards, football, tennis, etc., which have superseded the much less expensive indigenous amusements and games. For, the average man blindly follows the prevailing fashion; and with him show counts for more than substances, and the ornamental prevails over the useful.

The so-called "rise" in the standard of living of the people we are talking of has had very far-reaching conse-

quences of a most baneful character. Though frequently descanted upon as an indubitable index of prosperity, it has, in reality, proved a potent cause of the impoverishment not only, directly, of the great majority of the people who affect it, but also, indirectly, of the community as a whole. In the first place, it runs away with resources which should be husbanded for improving agriculture and other industries. Secondly, it entails an enormous increase in the consumption of imported articles which accelerates the decadence of indigenous industry and swells the volume of economic drain from the country. The writer recently visited a village, among the weaving population of which the Ranchi Co-operative Central Bank (the central organisation for financing Co-operative Credit Societies in the Ranchi district) had been making a highly praiseworthy attempt to introduce the flyshuttle loom. One of the most serious objections which the weavers urged against the use of this improved loom, was that they could not find a good market even for the scanty produce of the primitive looms which they had been used to ; what are they to do with the increased out-turn of the improved looms? Yet all the male villagers who congregated round us, including even the weavers themselves, were, almost without exception, well habited in mill-made clothes ! It is only the females who still affect the coarse and durable wide-bordered *saris*. The special encouragement which is being given to female education will, no doubt, soon do away with even this small amount of patronage which indigenous industry still receives from them. For in towns they too, especially the literates among them, almost universally adopt the current fashion which favours the more showy, but less lasting mill-made fabrics.

A broad survey of the results of the system of elementary education which has been spreading in India for well-

nigh three generations has forced the conviction upon us that it has not made the cultivators better cultivators, nor the artisans and tradesmen more efficient artisans and tradesmen than before. On the contrary, it has distinctly diminished their efficiency by inculcating in the literate proletariat a strong distaste for their hereditary mode of living and hereditary callings, and an equally strong taste for brummagem fineries and for occupations of a more or less parasitic nature. They have accelerated rather than retarded the decadence of indigenous industries and have thus helped to aggravate their own economic difficulties and those of the entire community. The following remarks which the Superintendent of the Lushai Hills made sometime ago in regard to the effect of education on the Lushais, apply also to the major portion of the mass of the people in other parts of India, especially to the aboriginal section of it :

“They are showing a strong tendency to desert agriculture, their hereditary occupation, and live by their wits. They have undoubtedly more money to spend or waste. This is evidenced by the change which is taking place in their dress. Stout homespun cloths are being discarded for foreign apparel, such as shirts, trousers or “shorts,” coats, caps, etc. Imported yarn is displacing the indigenous article in the manufacture of cloths, and cheap and tawdry articles of personal adornment are becoming very common. Though he may have more money to spend, it is impossible to say that the Lushai is now better off than he used to be. In his village he had all he wanted, and lived a simple and happy life. The effect on his moral character has also been far from satisfactory. It is true that a certain number of the Lushais have taken advantage of the openings for improvement so freely provided by Government and profited by them, but, on the whole the results are depressing, and are such as to give

grounds for anxiety for the future welfare of the race."

It is very doubtful if the literate peasantry have "more money to spend or waste" than their unlettered brethren. They generally live far beyond their means; and if some of them have more money, it is usually obtained not by the improvement of agriculture or manufacture, but by occupations of an unproductive, and not unoften also of a shady, character, the aspiration of the literate proletariat being to enter some service or live upon their wits. The best patrons of native manufactures are still the illiterate peasantry who have not yet taken to shoddy apparel and "cheap and tawdry articles of personal adornment," at least to the extent the literates have. In fact, it is they, especially their women, who have arrested the utter annihilation of indigenous industry.

The subjects which the current system of education comprises have mostly no immediate reference to the requirements of our cultivators, artisans and traders. Their boys cannot derive any earthly benefit, so far as their hereditary occupations are concerned, by memorising the feats of glorified swindlers, thieves and murderers, or by learning the names of mountains, rivers and towns only to be forgotten soon after. If they are sent to schools it is with the view that they may enter some service, preferably Government service, or some profession, preferably the legal profession. The Primary standard is looked upon as a stepping stone to the Middle English or the High School standard, and the High School standard to the Collegiate standard. This is applauded as the "uplift" of the "lower" classes by Government as well as by New India, though it is hardly consonant with common sense to dub the people who pursue agriculture, among advantage; a system which, instead of whom are to be found representatives of the highest Hindu castes, as "lower"

than those who earn their livelihood by service or by some profession of a more or less parasitic character, and to regard the translation of the former, into the fold of the latter as uplift. For a generation or so, in tracts which are called backward, that is, where the present system of education has not made much progress as yet, the literates through the favour and patronage of Government and of missionaries, in the case especially of the aboriginal tribes, appear to prosper, and their prospect seems very alluring. But sooner or later they are sure to be threatened with an economic crisis such as the gentry of Bengal are confronted with to-day.

What our people want is more or better food, and New India vies with the Government in giving them a system of so-called "education" which not only does not enable them to get it, or holds out any reasonable prospect of their ever being able to get it, but, on the contrary, fosters in them tastes and habits which make them despise indigenous products and render them fit subjects for the exploitation of scheming capitalists mostly foreign; a system which, instead of enlightening their intellect so that they may have a proper understanding of their own interests and those of the entire community, obfuscates it so as to make them oblivious of those interests and sacrifice substance to shadow, exchanging a good portion of what food they grow (which if kept in the country would make famine a rare\* occurrence), for imported manufactures, a good portion of which might be easily dispensed with, often without any harm and sometimes with considerable strengthening their moral fibre, weakens it, instead of inculcating in

\*The food grains that are exported are usually supposed to represent the surplus left after meeting the requirements of the country. As was observed, however, by Sir William Hunter, if the whole population ate as they should, no such surplus would exist.

them self-reliance and the dignity of honest, productive labour, makes them averse to it, not unoften of a degrading character, instead of fostering economy and self-control, fosters

self-indulgence and extravagance. If there is a panacea for our mundane ills, it is wisdom ; and education which does not contribute to its growth is a misnomer.

## PRACTICE OF RELIGION

BY ANANDA

THE CASE OF THE UNMARRIED

By now we are convinced that the only thing worth seeking after in life is God. He alone exists. All else is vanity. This conviction has taken possession of our mind. We feel that our energies should now be exclusively devoted to the realisation of God. Merely talking about Him or speculating about Him does not satisfy us. We want Him as tangibly and really as we now perceive the things of the senses. But how difficult to actually perceive Him this way ! The more we want Him, the further He seems to recede from us. Besides our mind itself is our enemy. Though consciously we want only God, our mind has often other secret desires. They often distract and divide us. It is a continuous hard struggle now. There are also our worldly preoccupations. We have to attend to certain worldly duties. We have to earn our living, serve the family and fulfil social and other obligations. These all take our mind away from the central object of our life.

Of course, if we can formally renounce the world, we can avoid many of these distractions. The world values spirituality too much to grudge a common fare and shelter to persons who renounce for God. And of course there are no more any ordinary family or social obligations. [Of course that does not mean that we become selfish and impervious to the needs of men. We serve society in a different and deeper way by renouncing the world and devoting ourselves to spiritual

pursuits.] But how many can renounce? Renunciation even as an action is not so easy as is imagined. There are various difficulties. It may be there are family entanglements which it is practically impossible to break through. Our mind itself may not be sufficiently prepared. Naturally, therefore, those who will have to remain in the world, in spite of their conviction that God is the only being worth realising, will have a tough work to pursue their heart's desire amidst the preoccupations of the world. We shall try to consider their situation here.

Among them we must recognise two classes: the married and the unmarried. Their cases are not the same. Firstly, of the unmarried. Hindu society has not been, till recently, in favour of celibates remaining in society. It has required them to go out of its pale. Either become monks or householders. The *via media* is not desirable. This attitude of Hindu society is not without its justification. The sex-instinct is strong, very strong in men. And the health and purity of society depend much on the proper regulation of this instinct. Unless a man is inspired by spiritual ideals, it is extremely difficult, nay impossible, to keep the sexual instinct in check. Those who are not spiritually inclined had better marry both for their own sake and for the sake of society. Without spirituality sexuality must have expression somehow or other. It is better to give it a normal

expression through marriage. A more selfish and despicable life than that of one who does not marry in order to avoid domestic and social responsibilities and yet indulges in sensuality, cannot be conceived. Such lives are pests of society and endanger its purity. So Hindu society does not approve of these loose bachelors. Unless you have spiritual idealism you must marry. And if you have spiritual idealism, go out of the society and live as monks do and as one of them. That is good for both you and society. You will have a better and less trying atmosphere and society will have a more clear and shining example in you.

But circumstances have changed. Society is no longer what it was before. Now there is more scope in it for spiritually inclined celibates than ever before. There is far greater scope for service. Formerly most social functions were parts of family duties. Any separate bodies were not required to fulfil those functions. The service of the sick, the hungry and the poor was part of family duty. Now separate organisations are needed for this. The society has also grown far vaster in its scope. Problems are more complex. Everything is being done on an organisational basis. Householders cannot do even a fraction of what is necessary. Celibates have, therefore, very great scope for life and activity within the society now. They can serve men in various ways. And service can be easily spiritualised, in fact, service can and should be done in the spirit of worship. These new opportunities are quite favourable to celibates living within society.

Such celibates, if they have no family entanglements, had better renounce formally. That is better for themselves.

They can continue their service of men even after renunciation. But their position will be better, and strength greater. But if they cannot so renounce, they have to be very careful, especially about the sexual instinct.

They must observe the strictest *Brahmacharya*. This is the foundation. Without it, outward celibacy is miserable. Then there must be regular spiritual practice. And next service. Spiritual practice consists in withdrawing consciousness from the world, body and lower mind and concentrating it on the Divine. It may take any form,—repetition of a name of God, or meditation or reasoning, or mental concentration. But every day some definite regular practice must be made. Without it service will be a mockery and there will be little progress in spiritual life. We are considering here the case of those who really yearn for God. They will, therefore, naturally devote a great deal of time to spiritual devotions. They may not have anything to do with service or any such thing. After attending to their daily worldly duties, they may devote the rest of the time to spiritual practice. But if they cannot thus utilise the whole day, they should employ the remaining hours in acts of service. Perhaps in the present condition of society service must be a part of everybody's life, householders (married and unmarried) or monks. But if we are to neutralise the effect of worldly influences, we must assiduously practise, every minute of our waking life, what is called spiritualisation. It consists in looking upon everything as Divine. This is a very helpful practice. It not only obliterates worldliness, but develops spiritual consciousness very quickly.

Whenever we meet a man, we consider him only as a man. Ours is by no means a clear conception. Do we consider him a body? No. A mind? No. A spirit? No. Our idea of man is a confused conglomeration of all these three. What we want is to perceive him as spirit only. But this is not so easy a task. We have for ages habituated ourselves to associate certain ideas with the perception of what we call man. We consider him to have a certain form, a mind, good or bad,



agreeable or disagreeable, and behind that an indefinite something. If we analyse our conception of man, we shall find that that indefinite something is the essential being. Forms and modes of mind are as it were extraneous wrappings. Yet these wrappings predominate in our conception. And then there is the name. Suppose you meet your friend Hari. Around this name you have associated certain ideas, of body, mind and consciousness; and you call it the man Hari. But analyse. When you meet Hari, do you meet a body only? You will certainly say, No. If that is so, why do you associate a particular body with your idea of Hari? You know perfectly well, it is all matter, it was once small, it has now grown big, and it changes continually. Besides it is very, very limited. But surely you do not think of Hari as being so limited. You rather think that he is a soul, a spirit in essence,—illimitable, eternal, full of bliss. Is it not absurd to combine these two diametrically opposite ideas—body and spirit—together? So whenever you meet Hari, try to eliminate from your consciousness of him the element of body. Try to think of him, if you like in the beginning, as a mind. When you talk to or behave with him, try to feel that you are behaving with a mind and not with a body as you really do now.

But that is only the start. Mind itself is extraneous. You see how outer circumstances change the mind of Hari, how the mind has changed from infancy to manhood and how it is changing every moment. Infinite are the moods of mind. Which of them is really Hari? Of course you will say that of all those moods you find some to be more lasting with him and as such the constituents of his personality. But do you not think that those lasting elements are not also really lasting? We Hindus believe in reincarnation. We know personalities change. Hari's personality also is not

eternal. If that is so, then why think of Hari as a person in that sense, having certain mental modes? Why associate him with the mind? Go beyond that. What do you now find him to be? Beyond all limitations and qualifications, what is he? He is the spirit, he is God Himself. What you have so long considered to be a man is really God Himself, infinite, eternal *Satchidânanda Brahman*. This realisation is tremendous. It is revolutionary. Henceforth whenever we meet Hari, we do not feel his body or mind, we feel him as eternal *Atman* and *Brahman*. This is spiritualisation.

It is easy to conceive. But very difficult to perceive. The human name and form have been associated in our mind with certain modes of consciousness, which are the antithesis of the consciousness of *Atman* or *Brahman*. The moment the mind perceives a human form or remembers a human name, those ideas leap into it in association. We have to negate and destroy this association; and we have to associate human name and form with the consciousness of Divinity. It is a very strenuous struggle. Every time that the mind reverts to the former association at the sight of a man, it must be made to forego it and conceive the new association. Thus the practice must be constant, every minute of the day. But how fruitful of results! Of course, in the beginning, it will appear very very difficult. The mind will refuse to act as desired. And the ideas will get confused. But slowly the practice will begin to tell. If we can pursue this practice earnestly, in one year we shall perceive a great change in our consciousness. Men will no longer appear as they do now. With this change in our outlook of man, will come a simultaneous change in our perception of other beings and the world. The world will reveal a new content. It will appear as instinct with Divinity. Our consciousness of our own self will also change. We

shall no longer feel ourselves as body or mind but as something finer and vaster than these.

This is a very fruitful practice. It requires a strong brain and great perseverance. But it is extremely helpful. If one—whether in the world

or outside—practises this, there will be much less obstruction in spiritual progress. Especially those who are in the world should practise this. This will neutralise the antithesis between the world and God and make other spiritual practices easier, and life fuller and sweeter.

## THE CHALLENGE OF THE ORIENT

BY VASUDEO B. METTA

In the eyes of an Oriental, Western civilization stands distinguished from all Eastern cultures by the love of change, of war, and of individuality which color its character. Love of change, in particular, glorified as the desire for progress, appears to obsess the Western mind. All changes wrought in political and social institutions, all remoldings of literary and artistic ideals, once they are established and can accordingly be regarded in retrospect, are generally assumed—without question—to be steps forward. Progress and change being thus considered identical, it is difficult for the Westerner to detect steps which may be regarded as retrogression.

The destruction of feudalism, to take an obvious instance, is taken without more ado to have been one move toward the ideal society. Now an Oriental naturally regards this change with less enthusiasm, since he has not, so to speak, participated in the escape and taken sides. He will argue that feudalism rested upon an elaborate system of duties and ranks, such as he himself is used to, while the industrial society which has gradually emerged from the wreckage of feudalism, stresses in their place rights and equalities. He will refuse to admit that the change of outlook is necessarily for the better, and will maintain that it is by a general emphasis on duties and not by stressing rights that society is worked into harmony.

This ideal which makes progress synonymous with change has been definitely adopted among Western peoples—and not unnaturally. They are essentially materialistic. It is not a matter of dispute that at a certain stage of their history nations develop continuously from a material point of view. Material change, that is, becomes quite inevitably material progress. But morality and spirituality do not develop at an equal pace with material advances. The modern West can truthfully claim to have done away with certain notorious evils of antiquity—for example, religious persecution, torture, and slavery. In their place, however, other evils have arisen. Religious wars have given place to economic wars; domestic slavery has been superseded by factory slavery, which is only a slight improvement over the old; and moral and spiritual maladjustments relatively unknown in the past are prominent in modern society. Rather than call the process of change a general progress, the Oriental, unprejudiced in favour of change itself, would prefer to describe it as the transfiguration of certain vices.

In the realm of art, Western love of change is shown with great clearness. The Westerner is amazingly restless in his search for beauty. In nature he has found a relatively permanent charm. The sun, moon, stars, hills, flowers, and animals have at all times attracted him, no less than they have attracted

other races. But beside these objects of permanent natural beauty he has been unable to place equally permanent canons of created beauty.

Eastern peoples—and the idea is difficult for Westerners to appreciate—have found such permanent canons of beauty. Conventions, like those of costume, have been quite deliberately maintained in the East because of their inherent and recognized beauty. Hindu women discovered the *sari* three thousand years ago, and have remained faithful to it ever since. Similarly, in painting and architecture, there have been comparatively few changes in Far Eastern styles for over a thousand years. The canons of Indian architecture have remained untouched, save in detail, for many centuries.

In literature the same contrast between East and West is to be observed. In the West one has only to compare any three plays of the moment—a society play, a crook play, and an “expressionistic” production—with a Greek tragedy or an Elizabethan drama, in order to see how greatly the essentials of dramaturgy have changed without any noticeable benefit. In China and India, on the other hand, respect and reverence for the great national writers of the past still reigns; imitation of their styles has continued unbroken through centuries.

Although one may criticize the Westerner for a certain fickleness and restlessness in these matters, it must be admitted, nevertheless, that the ideal of progress, however inconvenient and question-begging, has one practical advantage: the Westerner is naturally optimistic and free from despair. Hoping for better things to come, and, indeed, assuming them, he does his best to realize his expectations through his own efforts.

#### THE WEST'S PUGNACITY

Love of war—the second distinguishing feature of the Western mind—is a more serious matter, since it manifests itself in continual external and internal

conflicts. It is true that Asiatic peoples have had their external wars, but usually they have sprung from the ambition of kings or military adventurers rather than from the bellicose nature of the populace. The people have been roused only by the presence of invaders. In Europe, on the other hand, the masses have been—and are still—extremely bellicose. This explains why they have made so much of their military men, from pre-Christian times to the present day. The exploits of Alexander the Great, of Cæsar, and of Napoleon have been extolled in a manner which we can see to be disproportionate when the same spirit of exaltation is brought down to the war-time semi-deification of Marshal Hindenburg. The ancient Indians, however, did not consider the invasion of Alexander the Great worth recording in a single book. The Chinese, subject as they have been to military races, have expressed in their long literature nothing but contempt for military men. And even so warlike a people as the Japanese have not, so far as I know, one poem in praise of war.

Oriental society has had the ideal of stability before it; consequently, Oriental communities have usually avoided those conditions and movements which give rise to internal or class warfare. Taking for granted that certain values are eternal and unquestionable, Eastern peoples have refused to undertake the reform of society on any other basis. Thus it is that in Hindu and Chinese communities the saints and men of learning and wisdom have always been placed at the top of the ladder and the manual workers have been confined to the bottom. The law-givers and leaders of these communities upheld this arrangement, not through unreasonable prejudice or lack of humanity, but because they felt that if civilization is to remain more or less synonymous with culture, it should have physical labor as its base, and imagination, learning, and wisdom at its apex. Money-making, it may be noted, came in a position between the two.

Since Western society does not hold any series of values to be permanent—such would indeed be incompatible with the ideal of progress—class warfare is inevitable every time there is a shift in the balance of values. The class which cherishes and most strongly represents a new set of values is placed in conflict with those who defend an older set and are most threatened by its dissolution. Thus, from antiquity, class warfare reddens and disgraces the pages of Western history. In Greece the slaves, in Rome all the depressed classes—slaves, plebeians, and the landless—were pitted against the privileged classes. In the Middle Ages, kings, barons, and people fought a series of triangular duels throughout Europe. By the time of the French Revolution, the bourgeoisie and proletariat had joined hands against monarchy and aristocracy. At present it is the proletariat against all comers; Labor attempts to crush the power of Capital—with ruthless disregard for the classes which lie between the two combatants.

This class warfare, which exists permanently in the West, cannot possibly benefit society as a whole. Its roots and its fruits are always the same—group selfishness, urging one body to triumph over another. Each asserts, perhaps justifiably, that it is inspired by only the highest ideals. But once the members of a class come into power, they are as greedy and group-selfish as any of their predecessors.

#### WOMEN AND SEX WARFARE

The Western ideal of progress, being essentially war-creating, has brought about an additional variety of human conflict known as sex warfare. Western women, as we have been told for many years, resolved to attain freedom. What that freedom is, when attained, always seems difficult to define, for in a community absolute freedom is either impossible or meaningless. Whatever limited individual freedom we find practicable is determined more by the other members of society whom

we have to regard than by ourselves. However, where it is definitely self-limited, freedom becomes morally admirable. We respect the man or woman who seems to be aiming at a freedom which thinks less of its own enhancement than that of others.

Now the Oriental woman has actually attained this kind of freedom, whereas the Western woman is moving away from it. Her experiments in sex warfare can have only this result. In the West, the Oriental woman is popularly supposed to be a negligible sort of creature in society, and in private life the slave of her husband. But this is not true. She rules her husband in domestic matters, and her children in everything. Yet, in spite of the power she possesses, she has remained singularly selfless. She has the ideal of self-realization in mind as much as her Western sister, but she believes that she can realize herself better by subordinating her ego to that of her family than by pitting it against theirs. This is directly opposed to the principles of the modern Western woman, who believes that self-expression calls for qualities which are the very reverse of self-abnegation.

Restlessness and the violent clashes of groups, classes, and sexes are only two of the many facets of Western individualism. Another, and one which an Oriental notices particularly, is the effect of individualism on Western religion. In the deepest sense, religion has not, and never has had, a strong hold on the life of Western races. They are essentially a fighting people; the means of gaining a livelihood are of more consequence to them than the aims and ends of life itself. Nevertheless, there is a tendency in the West toward personal monotheism—not because the Westerner has a strong intellectual prepossession in favor of a God who is a personal Being, sitting apart from His Creation, but because personal monotheism gives him some assurance that his own individuality exists apart from that of his Maker. The Christian

doctrine of immortality is especially appreciated in the West because it satisfies the believer that his own little individuality will continue after death. The Westerner is instinctively horrified at Buddhism and such other religions which teach that at death a man's individuality is either extinguished or absorbed into that of his Maker. He terms such anti-individualistic religions negative. But they are negative only if one starts with a preconception that everything positive in human vitality is individualistic.

Individualism also makes itself felt in attempts to emancipate man from the bonds of family life. The Oriental, one must admit, has no reason to look with complete pride and complacency upon his subordination to the influence of his parents and the other older members of his family. Indeed, this subordination sometimes stands in the way of criticism and reform, and perhaps prevents him from realizing other ideals. Still, neither does the Westerner have reason to regard emancipation from family life as an unmixed good. It has destroyed or narrowed the scope for self-sacrifice and co-operation. Under the patriarchal system of the East, men and women willingly sacrifice all for the sake of their parents; in the West, the emancipation of the individual from family bonds tends to develop an egoism which more or less disregards all possibilities of sacrifice for the family in that wider sense of the word which includes more than wife and children.

Moreover, the break up of the patriarchal system in the West has blunted the individual's sense of public disgrace. The Oriental thinks of the inevitable dishonor to his family before he indulges in any misdemeanor or vice which is liable to exposure. In the same circumstances, the Westerner considers only his own position. Now presupposing that private conscience is an equally effective censor in both cases, it appears that the Westerner has less check on his evil propensities. An experimental state of society in which

the family counts for little or nothing seems to be exercising considerable attractions in America, Russia, and elsewhere; but if institutions be judged not for their chronological merits or novelty, but for their ethical and practical values, the family system, which is the negation of individualism, deserves better spokesmanship and stronger support in the West than it now obtains.

#### DEMOCRACY IN THE DOLDRUMS

The political compromise at which warring individualists inevitably arrive is democracy. In fact, democratic forms of government have been put into practice mainly with the idea that they afford the individual his greatest freedom. This *a priori* belief has turned out to be a delusion. Some of the democratic governments of the West are no less tyrannous and capricious than Roman Caesarism or the much abused despotisms of the East. The liberty of the individual is attacked and harassed in ways which vary from the all-important to the absurd. A compulsion, permanent in some countries and periodic in others, forces the citizen to join the army. Minor prohibitions extend to what he may eat or drink, between what hours he may buy and sell, and where he must register the births, marriages, and deaths which take place in his family.

Western governments are not satisfied with merely imposing external constraints on their people; they interfere with their thoughts and beliefs as well. The democratic government of Athens condemned Socrates to death for teaching his doctrines to the youth of the city, and persecuted Anaxagoras, Aristotle, and other philosophers on similar grounds. In the Middle Ages—and up to the present day in some countries—the Jews of Europe had to suffer a general religious persecution. The Spanish Moors were expelled or exterminated by their compatriots as a genial tribute to their religious independence.

The present situation in the United States scarcely needs emphasis. The law seeks to prevent men and women from drinking or even, in some cases, from smoking; the teaching of the theory of Evolution and the reading of Boccaccio are made misdemeanors in several parts of the country. In the development of democracy the next logical step is socialism. That the real liberty of the individual is not precisely increased under this régime, the greatest socialistic experiment—in Russia—fairly demonstrates.

The famous despotic governments of the East have not, on the whole, interfered with the liberty of the subject so severely as the present democratic governments of the West. The individual has not been forced to fight, any more than to register his births, marriages, and deaths. The Hindus and the Chinese, as we have already seen, were not imbued with any militaristic spirit; nor were they forced to absorb it in wartime, for peaceful work in agriculture, the arts, and industries proceeded uninterrupted. With the possible exception of the Mohammedan rulers in India, the despotic governments of India and China were not prone to persecute people for their thoughts and beliefs. No philosopher in these countries has had to choose between banishment and execution for teaching his views of life. Smoking, drinking, and the like were not made criminal offenses under Indian and Chinese despotisms. That these governments had their defects is not disputed, but it is worth questioning whether these defects were more serious to the individual than those of Western governments, which are based theoretically on the principles of individualism.

It may be remarked that democracy has a deeper hold upon the outward forms of Western governments than on the minds of the people themselves. Class snobbery and the aping of manners fashioned by royalty or aristocratic circles are amusing evidence of the shallowness of democratic feelings.

Should the King of England handle his knife in a peculiar way, English society adopts the mode. Should the Queen of England wear a yellow frock, then yellow frocks become the rage. And when the Prince of Wales began wearing a black tie and white waistcoat, the fashion percolated at a relatively high speed right down to the lower strata of the British middle classes. If the Western peoples were really democratic, they would, instead of imitating their kings and queens, have induced their monarchs to follow popular fashions, thus leveling from below. In India, where there is no pretense of democracy in the Western sense, the decencies of manners are preserved by a complete independence of spirit. Neither in dress nor in any minor point of convention do the people take lessons from their rulers.

#### ART FOR THE FAVOURED FEW

Art and literature in the West are moving directly away from democratic foundations and are producing a new type of class consciousness. The poetry of Homer and the plays of Æschylus were definitely written and sung for the people at large. The troubadours and trouvères of the Middle Ages sang their songs for kings and peasants alike. The paintings of Giotto and Cimabue and the great Gothic cathedrals were created for all classes of mankind. But individualism has now developed, and art and literature are definitely fenced off. Can anyone maintain that, say, Doctor Bridges or Mr. Epstein works for the joy of the masses, or that the majority of modern Western painters produce their pictures for any but a tiny section of the public? The poets and artists are, on the whole, in definite revolt against the wishy-washy ideals of democracy put forward as a seemingly cloak for government; and the aristocratic aloofness which they help inspire in their appreciators may go far to explain why they are so generally ignored or regarded as virtual enemies

to society by most Western governments.

Perhaps Western conditions are more than casually connected with the pronounced note of morbidity in the art of to-day, even including popular art forms such as the films and the commercial theater. Other civilizations have produced artists and writers of a morbid spirit, but none, I think, has yielded so many with such noticeably morbid tendencies. Sex and crime form the background of literary and even plastic art—in relatively crude forms in America and England, and in more perverse manifestations on the Continent. Certainly a partial explanation is to be found in the nervous strain induced by industrialism, and in the enormous extent of forced celibacy.

One of the most pitiable tendencies of modern Western life is the verbal stress laid on the brotherhood of man and the ideal of social welfare, accompanied, curiously enough, by an external exclusiveness and insistence on such prejudice as color bars. The ideal of the brotherhood of man is excellent in itself, but it is only a kind of compensatory expression for a profound discontent with a Western civilization in which it has little force. The lack of ideals of fellowship below the surface and in the reality of working life provokes their outward, verbal, and intellectual expression. Industrialism, working great material progress in the West, has helped to foster an initial spirit of individualism, but this very individualism is thwarted in its most satisfactory expression by industrialism's disregard of the individual apart from his work. Emphasis falls not upon the artisan's pleasure in work well done, but upon the marketable quality and quantity of the product. Leisure and love of knowledge have departed, and with them has gone the capacity for silence and meditation which is so closely connected with the spiritual growth and true individualism of man. Deprived of this spiritual sustenance, the Westerner pities himself and his

neighbors, and turns to vaguely philanthropic feelings.

#### BROTHERHOOD AND NEW-DISCOVERED HATES

At the same time he indulges in an intense hatred of other races, such as has probably never been known in the past. The Arabs in their great days (as may be seen in *The Arabian Nights*) seem seldom to have despised the Negro or the Spaniard merely because they were beings of different races. What prejudices they had sprang mostly from a religious source. The Chinese, it is true, have had a certain dislike for other races, but they have not flaunted a crop of literary assertions concerning their racial superiority, nor engaged, except in self-defense, in racial wars of extermination or conquest. Actual color prejudice was more or less unknown outside the civilization of the modern West. While the individual has generally preferred men of his own color, a mixture of all races took place under the Roman Empire. The last few centuries of Western domination have created permanent color problems which have yet to be solved.

Like individuals and like nations, civilizations are apt to consider themselves above decay. The color bar may actually precipitate the downfall of Western civilization, and a conqueror come from Asia or Africa may give it an unexpected *coup de grace*. Yet it is not the "Yellow Peril" or any outside competitor that Western civilization should chiefly fear. Far more dangerous, because less tangible and less obvious, are the possibilities of internal disruption. It is customary to assume that Western civilization will progress internally and that it possesses permanent elements which insure its lasting forever. But a civilization based on competition instead of co-operation, in which class warfare is chronic, and in which the practical element is prized far more than moral or spiritual values, in which commercialism is beginning to invade art, literature, and even religion

—that civilization has little vitality or strength to overcome decay.

The individual can attain in life a limited perfection only by proper selection and elimination—not by an all-embracing hunger for change. Create a circle for your life and eliminate from it all that which is unsuited to your constitution in the widest sense ; eliminate from it everything clashing with the highest ideals which you wish to realize—then you have some possibility of a harmony. The Greeks of the classical period seem to have grasped this conception very clearly, and so, to a degree, have the modern French, thereby producing the most harmonious culture now existing in the Western world. These two apart, Western peoples have not seen how the lesson applies to the group life ; they have been as ecstatic as children, striving to mix all kinds of contradictory ideals—intellectual, moral, and spiritual—as a possible step in the progress to perfection. Instead of a synthesis, therefore, the nations of the West are achieving a conglomeration of mutually antagonistic fragments.

Modern civilization in the West remains chaotic and inharmonious large-

ly because of its mixture of Greco-Roman and Christian ideals. The patriotism, pride, and material joys of a pagan life, which have come down in the classical tradition, are continually jostling and pushing very different ideals—love of mankind, humility, reverence for saintly men, and “the devotion to something afar from the sphere of our sorrow.” Christianity, as is not always remembered, is, by origin, an Eastern religion adapted with remarkable success to Western minds — and changed in the process. Is it too far-fetched to see in the present struggles within the Anglican community symptoms of a real incompatibility, a real incapacity for further adaptation and compromise which will apply to the temporal as well as the spiritual life of Western nations? If the interpretation is correct, Western civilization may have to reverse much of its so-called “progress” before it can attain again to even a temporary unity. In the process of reaction, I believe a more searching inquiry is likely to be made into the ways in which the so-called stagnant civilizations of the East have maintained their equilibrium for so many centuries.

## ASHTAVAKRA SAMHITA

BY SWAMI NITYASWARUPANANDA

### CHAPTER VII

DISCIPLE'S REALISATION

जनक उवाच ।

मय्यनन्तमहाभोधी विश्वपीत इतस्ततः ।

भ्रमति स्वान्तवर्तेन न ममास्यसहिष्णुता ॥१॥

जनकः Janaka उवाच said :

अनन्तमहाभोधी In the boundless ocean मयि in me विश्वपीतः the ark of the universe स्वान्तवर्तेन by the wind of its own nature इतस्ततः hither and thither भ्रमति moves मम my असहिष्णुता impatience न not अस्ति is.



Janaka said :

1. In me, the boundless ocean, the ark of the universe moves hither and thither impelled by the wind of its own nature. I am not impatient.<sup>1</sup>

[<sup>1</sup>*Impatient*—affected.

When the wind rises in the ocean, it tosses a ship hither and thither and even sends it down through its impact. But the ocean is not affected by the movements of the ship. Even so, the universe which rests on the reality of the Self is ever changing under the impulsion of its inherent laws. But the changing world does not affect the Self in the least.]

मय्यनन्तमहाश्वोधी जगद्बीचिः स्वभावतः ।

उदेतु वास्तमायातु न मे वृद्धिर्न च क्षतिः ॥२॥

अनन्तमहाश्वोधी In the limitless ocean मयि in me जगद्बीचिः the wave of the world स्वभावतः of itself उदेतु may rise अक्ष' dissolution आयातु may attain वा or मे my वृद्धिः increase न not क्षतिः decrease न not च and (भवति is).

2. In me, the limitless ocean, let the wave of the world rise or vanish of itself.<sup>1</sup> I neither increase nor decrease thereby.

[<sup>1</sup>*Of itself*—by its own nature. A wave is no other than the water of the ocean itself; only name and form have been added; there is no increase of substance. Even so is the world; its reality is Brahman itself. So when the world appears, name and form are superimposed on the reality of Brahman; and when it disappears, name and form vanish. The reality is ever the same.]

मय्यनन्तमहाश्वोधी विश्वं नाम विकल्पना ।

अतिशान्तो निराकार एतदेवाहमास्थितः ॥३॥

अनन्तमहाश्वोधी In the boundless ocean मयि in me विश्व' universe नाम called विकल्पना imagination (अस्ति is अहं I) अतिशान्तः highly tranquil निराकारः formless (अस्मि am) एतत् this एव alone अहं I आस्थितः abide.

3. In me, the boundless ocean, is the imagination of the universe. I am highly tranquil and formless. In this<sup>1</sup> alone do I abide.

[<sup>1</sup>*This*—namely, the Knowledge that the world is merely an appearance and that the Self in which it appears remains ever calm and formless.]

नात्मा भावेषु नो भावस्तद्वानन्ते निरञ्जने ।

इत्यसक्तोऽसृष्टः शान्त एतदेवाहमास्थितः ॥४॥

आत्मा Self भावेषु in the objects न not (अस्ति is) भावः object अनन्ते limitless निरञ्जने stainless तव in that (Self) नो not (अस्ति is) इति so (आत्मा Self) असक्तः unattached असृष्टः desireless शान्तः tranquil (अस्ति is) एतत् this एव alone अहं I आस्थितः abide.

4. The Self<sup>1</sup> is not in the objects nor<sup>2</sup> is the object in That which is infinite and stainless. Thus It is free from attachment and desire and tranquil. In this alone do I abide.

[<sup>1</sup>*Self etc.*—The Self is all-pervasive and infinite and cannot therefore be contained by finite objects, such as body, mind, etc.

<sup>2</sup>*Nor etc.*—in an absolute sense; for the Self is infinite, i.e., cannot have anything to do with any finite object, and stainless, i.e., cannot have any marks of limitation.

The Self is neither the container nor the contained, for nothing else really exists. The world appears through ignorance.]

अहो चिन्मात्रमेवाहमिन्द्रजालीपमं जगत् ।

अतो मम कथं कुत्र द्वयोपादेयकल्पना ॥५॥

अहो Oh अहं I चिन्मात्र' Consciousness itself एव surely जगत् world इन्द्रजालीपमं like a magic show अतः so मम my कुत्र where कथं how द्वयोपादेयकल्पना thought of the rejectable and the acceptable (स्यात् can be).

5. Oh, I am really Intelligence itself. The world is like a juggler's show. So how and where can there be any thought of rejection and acceptance in me?

[A man of Self-realisation looks upon this world as a juggler's show, false and illusory and having no existence even when it is visible to him. As such, he can have no attraction or repulsion for any object whatsoever of the world.]

## CHAPTER VIII

### BONDAGE AND LIBERATION

अष्टावक्र उवाच ।

तदा बन्धो यदा चित्तं किञ्चिद्वाञ्छति शोचति ।

किञ्चिन्मुञ्चति गृह्णाति किञ्चिद्द्वयतिर्दुष्यति ॥१॥

यदा When चित्त' mind किञ्चित् anything वाञ्छति desires शोचति grieves किञ्चित् anything मुञ्चति rejects गृह्णाति accepts किञ्चित् anything द्वयति feels joy for दुष्यति feels angry for (च and) तदा then बन्धः bondage (बन्ध is).

1. It is bondage when the mind desires or grieves at anything, rejects or accepts anything, feels happy or angry at anything.

तदा मुक्तियंदा चित्तं न वाञ्छति न शोचति ।

न मुञ्चति न गृह्णाति न द्वयति न दुष्यति ॥२॥

यदा When चित्त' mind न not वाञ्छति desires न not शोचति grieves न not मुञ्चति rejects न not गृह्णाति accepts न not द्वयति feels joy न not दुष्यति is angry तदा then मुक्तिः freedom.

2. It is liberation when the mind does not desire or grieve or reject or accept or feel happy or angry.

[Desiring, grieving, etc., are the modifications of the *Chitta*, the mind-stuff, which may be likened respectively to ripples and a lake. The bottom of the lake is as it were our own true self. We can catch a glimpse of the bottom only when the water is calm and clear and there are no waves. If the water is muddy or agitated, the bottom will not be seen. Likewise as long as there are mental modifications which are possible only so long as we identify ourselves with them, we cannot see the Self and are in ignorance and bondage. But when the mind is calm and we fully dissociate ourselves from its modifications, we realise our true nature and thus attain liberation.]

तदा बन्धो यदा चित्तं सत्तं कास्वपि दृष्टिषु ।

तदा मोक्षो यदा चित्तमसत्तं सर्वदृष्टिषु ॥३॥

यदा When चित्तं mind कासु अपि certain इन्द्रिय in the senses बन्धं attached तदा then बन्धः bondage यदा when चित्तं mind सर्वइन्द्रिय in all the senses अचक्षुः unattached तदा then मोक्षः liberation.

3. It is bondage when the mind is attached to any particular senses.<sup>1</sup> It is liberation when the mind is not attached to any of the senses.

[In the preceding two verses, bondage and freedom have been explained as identification with and dissociation from the *internal*, mental modifications. Here they are being explained in reference to *external* objects.

<sup>1</sup>Senses—*Dristi* means sight or the sense of seeing, and hence any instrument of perception,—any sense.]

यदा नाहं तदा मोक्षो यदाहं बन्धनं तदा ।

मत्वेति हेलया किञ्चित् मा गृहाण विमुञ्च मा ॥४॥

यदा When अहं I न not तदा then मोक्षः liberation यदा when अहं I तदा then बन्धनं bondage इति this मत्ता thinking हेलया easily किञ्चित् anything मा not गृहाण accept मा not विमुञ्च reject (वा or).

4. When there is no 'I', there is liberation; when there is 'I', there is bondage. Considering this, easily refrain from accepting or rejecting anything.

[Egoism is bondage, constituting as it does the identification of the Self with body, mind, etc.; and egolessness is liberation. When there is no ego, there is no identification of the Self with mind, body, etc., and the Self is realised as one without a second pervading the whole universe. Having this knowledge one becomes perfectly tranquil and free from desire or aversion for anything.]

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### In This Number

We publish in this issue ROMAIN ROLLAND'S essay on Keshab Chunder Sen, a part of his chapter on the *Builders of Unity*. We find it necessary to add a few words in comment. Speaking of a missionary tour that Keshab undertook in 1873, M. Rolland says: "The tour opened up new horizons and he believed that he had found the key to the popular polytheism, so repugnant to the pure theism. But to this union, realised spontaneously by Ramakrishna at the same time, Keshab brought a spirit of intellectual compromise." It is true Keshab undertook a missionary tour in 1873. But there is no evidence

that he made any attempt to understand or understood the significance of Hindu polytheism about that time. But we have, on the other hand, the witness of Protap Ch. Mozoomdar (in his *Life of Keshab Chunder Sen*) that Keshab thought he had found the key to Hindu idolatry about the year 1879 when again he went on a missionary tour. The article on Hindu idolatry, from which M. Rolland has quoted, was written by Keshab in 1880. It is scarcely correct to say that Sri Ramakrishna realised the union of theism and polytheism about the same time as Keshab. The question simply did not arise with Sri Ramakrishna. If, however, the har-

mony of the different Hindu creeds is meant, it was realised by Sri Ramakrishna long long ago—some 18 years—before Keshab Ch. Sen thought he had realised it. Another point also requires to be noted. M. Rolland says that Keshab Ch. Sen began to proclaim the New Dispensation in 1875. The statement does not seem to be borne out by facts. The New Dispensation was proclaimed by Keshab about 1880. It is true he used the words *New Dispensation* in his lecture, *Behold the Light of Heaven in India*, which he delivered in 1875. But the lecture itself contained little or nothing of the teaching that came to be proclaimed later on as New Dispensation. It was mainly devoted to a consideration of a few theistic similarities between the Jews and the Hindus and between the Christians and the Hindus. . . . *The Challenge of the Orient* by VASUDEO B. METTA is taken from a recent issue of *The Forum* (New York). It is a neat summing up of some of the salient features of the Western civilization from the Indian view-point. A reply to Mr. Metta's article by the celebrated English writer, G. K. Chesterton, appeared in the same issue of *The Forum*. We hope to reproduce it in our next number. After studying at Cambridge and the Sorbonne, Mr. Metta returned to India and practised law in the State of Baroda. Finding this uncongenial, he became art critic of *The Bombay Chronicle*. He next went to New York. He is now in England.

### A Reply to Mahatma Gandhi

Mahatma Gandhi has been pleased to express in his *Young India* (July 25) his opinion on our comments in two recent issues of *Prabuddha Bharata*\* on the cult of *Charka* and *Khaddar*. But we confess we have been disappointed by his reply. He has given us no real argument. We expected a real and substantial justification of the *Charka*

and *Khaddar* programme from its originator and chief inspirer. Instead, we have a few commonplaces from him.

Mahatma Gandhi has taken us to maintain the following five propositions in our notes :

1. "India must become industrial in the Western sense ;"

2. "The question of physical existence cannot be solved by the *Charka* ;"

3. "The conditions attached to the success of the *Charka* make too large claims on prevailing tendencies and human nature ;"

4. "The justification and superiority of machines lie not so much in meeting the internal needs of a country as in invading and capturing foreign markets ;"

5. "If India is to live and fulfil her spiritual mission among men, she must modernise herself. . . . Let us unhesitatingly and energetically assimilate the modern industrial methods. . . But along with that we must practise spirituality intensely, create a mighty spiritual idealism in the mind of the nation and a great love for the country so that on the wings of them we may cross over the dark valley of modernism in which the West is sadly groping. *Without spiritual idealism, modernism will spell a speedy ruin.*"

We have to say that this bare catalogue scarcely does justice to our thesis and plea. Devoid as it is of even a brief reference to the reasons which have led us to these propositions, it must have misled the readers of *Young India*. Mahatmaji ought to have mentioned and refuted them. He has merely made a few pointless comments on those propositions.

Yet, let us see if these independent comments can stand examination. At the outset Mahatmaji remarks that the above five propositions "are obviously based upon the assumption that modern civilisation is comparatively a good thing and that it cannot be resisted with any hope of success." The first part of this assumption is obviously not ours. We never sought to compare

\*He has not evidently read our article and note in the June *Prabuddha Bharata*.

even by implication the modern civilization with any other civilization in the notes in question. What we maintain is that, good or evil, living as we do in the modern age and not in the ancient or medieval, we cannot escape the modern civilization. It is only blindness that will not see the palpable fact that India cannot avoid being industrialised when every other country in the world is being so, and when India herself is being mechanised rapidly in various departments of her industrial life. Mahatmaji refers to the "growing body of enlightened opinion in the West," which, according to him, "distrusts this civilization." Surely it was not our purpose to discuss civilization in those notes on *Khaddar*. That the modern Western civilization is not perfect and is aggressively material, has been emphatically declared by ourselves again and again in the pages of *Prabuddha Bharata*. But to cure that civilization of its materialism and to get rid of all machineries and revert to the *Charka* are not identical terms.

No, we do not mean that we are to imitate the West, as Mahatmaji supposes. The question is not one of imitation or originality. The real problem is to determine an industrial system which will be adequate for our purposes having reference to our internal need as well as internal and external conditions. It cannot be arbitrarily chosen. It requires a thorough understanding of several sciences,—economics, sociology, etc., and profound insight into world-conditions and not merely moral considerations. Has Mahatmaji considered the problem in this light? Had he done so, he would not have sought to annul the first proposition in the way he has done. He argues as follows: "The Western civilization is urban. Small countries like England or Italy may afford to urbanise their system. A big country like America with a very sparse population, perhaps cannot do otherwise. But one would think that a big country, with a teeming population

with an ancient rural tradition which has hitherto answered its purpose, need not, must not copy the Western model." Scarcely a serious argument. There are at least two errors in it. (1) Mahatmaji forgets that Western civilization was not always urban. It also was rural before modern industrialism came into being with the invention of steam engines and electrical machineries. (2) He says that "the ancient rural tradition" of India "has hitherto answered its purpose." This is a grievous mistake. This system failed miserably before the onslaughts of modern industrialism as introduced into India through Western commerce. This is really the main reason of our economic collapse. In our notes, we elaborated the reasons why we cannot but industrialise ourselves. We detailed our needs and the national and international circumstances and showed that only present-day industrialism can serve our purpose. Mahatmaji ought to have taken up those points and shown how his *Charka* etc. fulfils those needs and meets those circumstances. He has avoided these main issues and has contented himself with saying that "One man's food is often another man's poison," though as a matter of fact one man's food is often another man's food.

His answer to the second proposition is that it "cannot hold water." "On the contrary that question can only be answered by the *charkha* or its equivalent." He refers to Mr. Gregg's theory of solar power. Does Mahatmaji really mean that in other countries people are being only *replaced* by machines? What we have proposed is no mere *replacement*. Let every ounce of human energy be utilised, and let as much of mechanical energy and natural powers as procurable be *added* to it. Mr. Gregg assumes that India will not have any foreign trade. We admit that if India is not to have any foreign trade, large-scale industrialism will not be quite useful; and we may continue our present existence of semi-

starvation and semi-nudity and of political and economic slavery, till the foreign exploiters of India completely industrialise her for their own gains and reduce us more and more to the states of mere clerks and coolies (for they will establish more and more factories in India with the passing of days, even if we do not), or God in His mercy wipes us off the face of the earth. Hence what Mahatmaji tabulates as our fourth proposition: "The justification and superiority of machines lie not so much in meeting the internal needs of a country as in invading and capturing foreign markets."

But why should we assume that India cannot have any foreign trade? India always had it, if history is to be believed. The Hindus surrendered it to the Muhammadans during the Muhammadan rule and refused to cross the "black waters." Mahatmaji indicates that this condition is to be perpetuated. "Unfortunately or fortunately for India there are no foreign markets to invade and capture," he says. And he argues that "We may invade and capture foreign markets if we will at the same time invade and capture the foreign manufacturing countries," a statement the meaning of which is not quite clear to us. Mahatmaji taunts us for our "grand" scheme for capturing foreign markets. Perhaps we are more hopeful than Mahatmaji. But we cannot forget that we are one of the richest countries of the world in natural resources and one of the most populous. We also find that the economic positions of nations are constantly undergoing change, and that the industrial efforts of other nations are being crowned with success. In face of these facts, we cannot consider India alone as an unalterable mummy.

Mahatmaji's answer to the third proposition is that "in the midst of confusion and disappointment running through so many national activities" the *Charka* has spread "through 2000

villages" and has shown "the steady, though necessarily slow progress. . . . during the past eight years' revival." This is by no means an adequate answer. Besides Mahatmaji has not mentioned how much money and manpower have been expended for that purpose and also what progress modern industrialism has made during that period. Without these facts, Mahatmaji's statistics can scarcely convince.

The above arguments of Mahatmaji are really extraneous. We think, we hope legitimately, that the main consideration behind Mahatmaji's *Charka* cult is not economic, but moral. This fact finds expression in his answer to the fifth proposition. He holds that modern industrialism with its implication of foreign exploitation is irreconcilable with the spiritual idealism of India, that is to say, if India is to be faithful to her spiritual ideals, the only economic system possible is cottage industry; and he quotes the Bible and the Upanishad. This indeed is the foundation of Mahatmaji's economic policy. *We emphatically repudiate this implication of India's spiritual idealism.* We have elaborated our reasons in our June article ("Ring Out the Old, Ring In the New"). We do hold that India can be spiritual and at the same time industrially great with an extensive foreign trade. Mahatmaji's entire philosophy is, as we think, vitiated by one basic error: he wants to apply the highest ideal to one and all indiscriminately. Hinduism has always discounted such zeal. It has prescribed to every one according to his capacity. To those who are worldly-minded, it has proposed worldly prosperity and enjoyment, earning of much wealth and conquest of kingdoms. For those who are spiritually inclined, it has prescribed renunciation. This diversity of ideals is embodied in what is known as *Chaturvarga*,—the fourfold ideal of *Dharma, Artha, Kāma* and *Moksha*. Mahatmaji emphasises only *Moksha*. Ideals may be good. But too high ideals often ruin, if they are pressed

on the unprepared. India should beware of this danger.

Mahatmaji is pained that articles with such a conclusion ("dismal" he calls it) should appear in *Prabuddha Bharata* "which is solely devoted to spiritual culture." We are sorry that Mahatmaji has been pained. But we must respectfully submit that we claim to be as faithful to spiritual culture as Mahatmaji himself and that he should not expect that every one would accept his ideals and implications of spiritual culture. If Mahatmaji can reconcile himself to Sri Krishna's exhortations to Arjuna to fight and conquer his enemies, which intersperse the sublime spiritual teachings of the Gita, we hope he will find it possible to forgive us our advocacy of industrialism.

Mahatmaji says: "What was more painful still was the exploitation of the name of Swami Vivekanand in connection with the double-edged theory propounded by the writer. The inferential invocation of the authority of the illustrious dead in a reasoned discussion should be regarded as a sacrilege." An organ of Swami Vivekananda's Order, devoted to the dissemination of the Swami's teaching, by "inferentially" invoking him as an authority, commits an act of sacrilege! What a strange indictment! Does Mahatmaji imply that we are misinterpreting the Swami? If so, will he quote chapter and verse?

He thus concludes: "After all we, a handful of educated Indians, are shouldering a serious responsibility in gambling with the fortunes of the dumb millions whose trustees we claim to be. A still more serious responsibility rests upon the shoulders of those of us who claim to possess some spiritual perception." We respectfully bow to this warning. May we hope that the preachers of the *Charka* cult also, whether they claim spiritual perception or not, will heed the same warning?

### Kumbha Mela and Buddhism

The great Kumbha Melā will be held next winter in the confluence of

the Ganges and the Jumna at Allahabad. Thousands of pilgrims will congregate from all parts of India to see the great Mela and have a "darshan" of the great Sādhus who will assemble there. Hindu religion (in the broader sense of the word) will be represented by all its different sects like Sanātanis, Sikhs, Jains, Arya Samājists, etc. But it is a matter of great pity that the largest branch of Hindu religion, i.e. the Buddhists are not now represented (as they used to be in old days) in the holy congregation. It must be admitted that Buddhism like Shaivism, Vaishnavism, Shikhism, Jainism and many other "isms" owes its origin to the great and ancient Hindu religion, and is founded on the three cardinal doctrines, i.e. (i) the Doctrine of Karma, (ii) Doctrine of reincarnation and (iii) Doctrine of Moksha. We all know that like all other sister doctrines Buddhism and Prāhmanism flourished side by side for hundreds of years till both were fused into one, i.e. Neo-Brāhmanism which profitably assimilated a good deal of the Buddhist ideas. There is no lack of historical evidence to show that during the Buddhist predominance and subsequent transition period monks and lay men of both Buddhist and Sanatanist persuasions congregated in most brotherly feelings in the great religious fair at Prayaga. The kings of those days like Harshavardhana scarcely made any distinction in showing honour between a Buddhist Bhikshu or a Sanatanist Sannyāsi. A sincere attempt should now be made to induce representatives of our Buddhist brethren to join the great Kumbha Mela at Allahabad. Invitations should be sent to leading Buddhist monasteries in Nepal, Thibet, Burma, China, Japan, Siam and Indo-China, etc. Besides we must not forget to invite our brothers in Malaya States, Bali, Java, and Sumatra. We should not only congregate in a great conference for exchange of opinions and ideas, but arrangement

should be made to include our Buddhist brethren in the great bathing proces-

sions that are held during the Kumbha Mela.

## REVIEW

THE PHILOSOPHY OF UNION BY DEVOTION. By Sri Srimat Swami Nitya-padananda Abadhut. Mahanirban Math, Monoharpukur Road, Kalighat, Calcutta. X+192 pp. Price Rs. 1/8/-.

The book is an English rendering of a Bengali work *Bhaktiyoga-Darsan* by Yogacharya Sri Srimat Abadhut Jnanananda Deva, the translator's Guru. It is not a philosophical treatment of devotion (*bhakti*), as its title indicates, but a devotee's utterance of his own appreciation and understanding of it in words simple, sweet and calm, flowing naturally from within. In the course of 26 discourses contained in the book, the author has represented the various characteristics and manifestations of *bhakti* in its different stages of development. Frequent reference has been made to such authorities on *bhakti*, as *Narada-Sutra*, *Bhagavadgita* and *Gheranda Samhita*, from which he quotes passages and explains them in the light of his experiences. With the same regard for authority, he occasionally mentions the views of his own spiritual master and brother Sannyasins.

The book does not savour of any sectarian spirit. The author is remarkably liberal in his views. He has equal respect for all religious faiths and forms of worship. But his catholicity has not resulted in a synthetic unity of different doctrines and practices, but in only a loose aggregation in which the basic differences between the philosophical outlooks are often lost sight of.

We are at one with the author in his view that devotion (*bhakti*) leads to union with God according to the dualists as well as the non-dualists. But we hold at the same time that there is a fundamental difference in their conceptions of devotion,—a distinction which the author to all appearances ignores. This fact is also evident in the following remark of the translator in his Introduction to the book: "The teachings of Lords *Rishava Deva*, *Sri Krishna* and *Chaitanya Deva* also point to the supremacy of devotion. Even the great *Sankarāchārya*, who is regarded as

the most distinguished upholder of the non-dualistic theory, has said, 'Devotion is the highest of all the causes of liberation.' " But it should be noted that devotion (*bhakti*) as conceived by Sankara is simply another form of knowledge (*jñāna*)—consciousness of identity with the Supreme Being, which is, according to him, the only direct means of the attainment of liberation. For, in the very next verse of his *Vivekachūḍāmaṇi*, from which the above line is in all probability quoted, Sankara explains *bhakti* as the search of one's own self. And the self, he says, is non-different from Brahman. Liberation in his sense is perfect identity with Brahman. But *bhakti* according to the Vaishnavas is supreme attachment to the Divine Being who has a personality distinct from that of the *jīva* (finite self).

Similarly, the author fails to recognise certain distinctive characteristic of the different forms of worship (*sādhana*). In the following passage he attributes the wifely attitude (*kānta-bhava*) of Sri Krishna-worshippers to the worshippers of Siva and Rama. "When a devotee is bent upon holding intercourse with *Siva*, he has to awaken in him the consciousness that he is *Kālī* or *Durgā*, etc., then and then only his desire will be fulfilled. When a devotee is bent upon holding intercourse with *Sri Rāmachandra* and *Sri Krishna*, he has to do so by awakening in himself the consciousness that he is *Sītā* and *Rādhā*, because *Sītā* and *Rādhā* are the *Saktis* of *Sri Rāmachandra* and *Sri Krishna* respectively." We do not think that the devotees of Siva and Rama identify themselves with *Kālī* and *Sītā* respectively to realise their supreme love towards the objects of their worship. *Saiva* and *Shakta* cults being based on Advaitism, the identification of the worshipper and the worshipped has been sanctioned, nay, enjoined on them. In that sense a *Shakta* can identify himself with *Kālī* or even *Siva* knowing him to be the static aspect of the same *Shakti*. Ramaworship in particular is characterised by servant-consciousness. Even a Vaishnava who



bears the loving attitude of a wife towards Sri Krishna does not as a rule impersonate Radha, but rather seeks her grace following the foot-steps of a *Gopi* (one of her maids of honour) to be a helpmate in their *leela* (sport of love).

The translation though literal reads much like an original work. It contains a number of explanatory notes on the technical terms, which will prove useful to those who are not acquainted with Sanskrit religious terminology. We received a soiled copy. But perhaps the book is good enough in get-up.

*The Significance of Jesus.* By Rev. N. Macnicol, M.A., D.Litt. The Christian Literature Society for India, Madras, 100 pp. Price As. 12.

The book under review belongs to the 'Things New and Old' series which seeks to explain to Indian readers the fundamental principles of the Christian religion. And it may at once be said that the author has succeeded to a great extent to fulfil the objects of the series. Indeed the significance of Jesus has been nicely presented to the readers in regard to the several epithets which have been applied to him by the evangelists as well as by Jesus himself. So far his attempt is well and good. But we regret that in all those places where he has attempted reflections on and comparisons with the customs and traditions as well as the religion of the Hindus, he has given proof of sad misunderstanding. As for example, the author says: "We see parallels between the thought and the aspiration that the two systems enshrine. Both desire victory over the world. The way to that victory for the Christian is faith in God and self-surrender. These are elements, too, in the Hindu path to release, but each element—God and faith and self-surrender—is a far more shadowy and abstract thing here than it is there; and they lead to a shadowy goal. God (Brahman) is a wraith, and faith is the opening of the eyes to the fact of the world's illusion, while self evaporates in mist and nothingness, constrained by no love, won by no ideal goal." Can ignorance go further? Continues the author: "All these elements have to be enriched—just as the logos idea of the Greeks and of Philo had to be enriched, but far more than was necessary there. A richer moral meaning must be given to them so that they may lay hold of the heart and will. It is by the moralisation of the Indian teaching, the loosening of its Karma bonds, the bringing

of it from the abstract heights down to the level of our common needs, and the bringing of God near to us as one whom Jesus could call, Father—it is by these ways of reconciliation that the Vedantist and the Christian can meet and can, one day, we trust, rejoice together in the experience of a world overcome. But that just means that the house of Hinduism must be built again upon a new foundation, namely the foundation of Christ Jesus." The author is welcome to his dreams. But we may warn him that they will never be realised. The get-up and printing of the book are good.

*An Englishman Defends Mother India.* By Ernest Wood. Ganesh & Co., Madras. 158 + IX pp. Price Rs. 3/-.

We have read with great interest this excellent book which is a reply to the notorious "Mother India." We wish the Professor had written the book earlier, though its value is not of a transient nature, and had it published in England and America where alone it would have done the greatest service. The work is ably written, in a calm, dispassionate style. The charges brought against India by Miss Mayo have been taken up one by one and replied to with cogent arguments and well-attested and relevant facts and figures. Not only is India vindicated, but she has often come out better in comparison with the West. A great merit of the book is that the author is an Englishman who has been resident in India for many years, knowing many parts of the country quite well and having mixed with Indians intimately. Besides he knows Sanskrit.

The book is divided into 25 chapters, some of the headings being The Family, Marriage, Motherhood, Child-Birth, Widowhood, Religion, Indecency and Vice, Character and Manners, The Cow, Cruelty, Sanitation, Medicine, The Caste System, The Outcasts, The Villages, and The Reforms. There are 50 plates having great evidential value. The best answer to "Mother India" has hitherto been Lala Lajpat Rai's "Unhappy India." The present book is not redundant, but fulfils a real need. We Indians also will profit greatly by its perusal. The author is very moderate in his statements, sometimes even overcautious. But perhaps that itself is a merit in the present case.

The publishers have to be congratulated on the fine get-up of the book.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### **Ramakrishna Sevak Conference, Dacca, Bengal**

The second session of the Vikrampur Ramakrishna Sevak Sammilani was held at Pania R. K. Sevasrama on the 6th, 7th and 8th July. Representatives hailing from about a dozen of Sevasramas joined the conference and discussed the feasibility of a plan of concerted action for social service in Vikrampur in a non-sectarian spirit of co-operation. Srijut Mukundalal Bose of Rarikhial Ramakrishna Sevasrama, who was the Chairman of the Reception Committee, delivered his address and welcomed the President and delegates present. His address was followed by the address of the President, Swami Viswananda of Belur Math. Throughout the three days, discussions on religious and other social matters received the careful attention of the gentlemen present. Many respectable people of light and leading from villages far and near joined the occasion and took an active part in the proceedings. Music and *Sankirtan* formed an important feature. On the last day the annual *Utsab* ceremony was held and hundreds of *Dariba-Narayanas* were sumptuously entertained. A long procession of boats, with a picture of Sri Ramakrishna well decorated and followed by band parties and music, added to the grandeur of the ceremony. It is a matter of deep satisfaction that the people of Vikrampur are evolving a plan of concerted action for social service and propaganda to be carried on in the villages which just at this time stand in need of reconstruction in different ways. Thanks are due to Babu Makhamlal Hore and Babu Heramba Behari Dey, but for whose active interest the session would not have reached this high watermark of success.

### **R. K. Mission Home of Service, Benares**

As in other years, the report of the Home of Service for the year 1928 is a record of good work done. The activities of the Home have been growing from year to year in all the channels as will be seen from the following facts and figures.

I. *Indoor General Hospital*. The total number of new cases admitted was 1,806 of

whom 1,132 were cured and discharged, 148 were relieved of their sufferings, 95 left or were discharged otherwise and 283 died. The daily average number of indoor cases was 134.

II. *Refuge for Women Invalids*. 12 helpless, aged and invalid women were maintained by the Home in a house specially gifted by a gentleman at Dasaswamedh.

III. *Girls' Home*. There were 7 girls in the women's department of the Home receiving education in the local Girls' High School and participating in the general work of the Women's Hospital which is entirely run by voluntary lady workers.

IV. *Home for Paralytic Patients*. 26 paralytic cases were accommodated and treated during the year.

V. *Dharmasala for the Poor and the Helpless*. About 190 people were given shelter and food during the year under review.

VI. *Outdoor Dispensary*. During the year 28,706 new cases attended the Outdoor Dispensary and the number of repeated cases was 43,258. The daily average attendance was 201 and the total number of operation cases was 668.

VII. *Outdoor help to Invalids and Poor Ladies of respectable families*. There were 165 permanent recipients of such outdoor relief during the year and this cost the Home Rs. 2,266/- in money and 143 mds. 13 srs. 12 ch. of rice and *atta* besides clothing and blankets.

VIII. *Special and Occasional Relief*. Special and occasional help was given as far as practicable to 1,235 persons during the year.

Besides all these, the Home has 25 beds for poor invalids who are temporarily admitted and given food and shelter till they are in a position to make provision for themselves.

During the solar eclipse of the year cholera broke out in an epidemic form in Benares and a band of workers of the Home engaged themselves solely in nursing and treating the cholera cases day and night. The number of cases treated was 57 of which 30 died.

The total receipts of the general fund on all heads amounted to Rs. 50,146-2-7 and the total expenses to Rs. 38,012-14-0.

The immediate needs of the Home are :  
 (a) Endowments for beds for the sick and the invalid. The total cost of permanent endowment for each bed is Rs. 3,000/- for the sick, and Rs. 2,500/- for the invalid.  
 (b) Beddings and clothings. (c) Construction of a suitable building to house the workers.  
 (d) Construction of a good kitchen and store-room in the women's department. (e) Construction of an Invalid Home for women.

Any amount, large or small, will be thankfully received and acknowledged by  
 (i) *Hony. Asst. Secy., Ramakrishna Mission Home of Service, Luxa, Benares City, U.P.* ;  
 or (ii) *The President, Ramakrishna Mission, P.O. Belur Math, Dt. Howrah, Bengal.*

### R. K. Mission, Dacca

The annual report of the Dacca Branch of the R. K. Mission for the years 1927 and 1928 is to hand. It humbly tries to fulfil all the objects of the Mission by carrying on works of service under all its three heads, viz., I. Missionary, II. Educational, and III. Charitable.

I. *Missionary.* *Weekly Sittings* were held altogether 242 in number, in four different centres of the town, in which there were readings from holy books and discourses; *Classes and General Discussion* on the Gita, Upanishad and works of Swami Vivekananda were held; *Bhajans and Kirtans* were arranged; *Lectures and Discourses* by learned professors and monks of the R. K. Order were delivered; and *Birthday Anniversaries* of Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda, Buddha, Sankara, Chaitanya, Sri Krishna and Jesus Christ were celebrated.

II. *Educational.* The Centre conducts a free school in its own premises with 50 boys on the roll, and guides and manages two free schools with 50 boys and 40 girls on the rolls in a village five miles from the

town. Poor students were temporarily maintained in the Mission House. There are a library and a reading room in the Mission premises and another in the centre of the town. And there is a gymnasium within the Mission compound.

III. *Charitable.* (a) *Outdoor Dispensary* : There were 4,133 and 4,675 patients treated in the years under review. (b) *Outdoor Seva Work* : Medical help was given to 34 patients, and 63 patients were nursed in their own houses; and 22 dead bodies were cremated. (c) *Cholera Relief* : The Mission arranged relief work in several places in times of cholera in epidemic forms. (d) *Famine Relief* : Towards the relief of the helpless famine-stricken people of Balurghat, a sum of Rs. 101/- and some old cloths were sent to the Secy., R. K. Mission, Belur. Besides all these, 39 (in 1927) and 30 (in 1928) families were helped every month with rice and 21 persons were given temporary pecuniary help.

The total receipts on all heads amounted to Rs. 4,183-14-5 and Rs. 4,221-6-5½ and the expenses to Rs. 2,337-15-0 and Rs. 2,570-5-1 in 1927 and 1928 respectively.

The present needs of the Mission are : (1) To secure permanent right of a plot of land situated within the Mission compound, the approximate cost of which is Rs. 4,000/-. (2) To construct a pucca drain costing Rs. 2,000/-. (3) A permanent fund. (4) A fund to start some free primary schools in villages and to inaugurate a circulating library with arrangements for magic lantern lectures, the initial expenses for which would be Rs. 2,000/-.

We congratulate the Centre for its various activities and hope the generous public will liberally help it to extend its usefulness. Any help will be thankfully received and acknowledged by *The Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission, P.O. Wari, Dacca, Bengal.*

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*"Renunciation and Service are the two national ideals of India. Intensify her along these channels and the rest will take care of itself."*

—Swami Vivekananda.

## **R. K. MISSION FLOOD RELIEF WORK**

The Secretary, R. K. Mission, writes under date 24-8-29 :

The public is already aware that we have been carrying on extensive relief work in the flood-stricken areas of the Sylhet and Cachar Districts of Assam. The number of relief centres, including the three recently opened in the Hailakandi Sub-division, is eight. From these centres covering an area of 164 square miles, not only food but clothes and medicines also are being distributed to the needy. Hut-building which is a necessity in all the centres, has been finished in one, *viz.*, Tarapur. The condition of the people in the affected areas is simply deplorable. Many are homeless ; a great many are victims to various stomach complaints due to eating improper food ; while the vast majority are facing starvation and lacking sufficient clothing. In the last three weeks ending 19th August we have distributed, besides some clothes, 1,037 mds. 10 srs. of rice to 8,000 people belonging to 275 villages. Our two dispensaries, under expert physicians, are treating about 160 cases daily. We have been distributing some fodder for cattle too.

Our work in Akyab in Burma, is no less exacting. In the week ending 3rd August last, from our four centres 310 bags of rice and 137 pieces of cloth have been distributed to 5,332 people belonging to 51 villages. Our charitable dispensary there treated 179 cases of dysentery, etc., during that week.

Reports of heavy floods have been reaching us from parts of the Midnapur District, but owing to want of funds we have succeeded in opening only one centre, at Radhaban in the Tamruk Sub-division. A dam on the Khirai having given way, about 20 square miles of land comprising some 45 villages, have been inundated. In 30 of these villages standing crops have been destroyed. This has dealt a terrible blow to the poor people, who had already suffered from scant crops during the last two years. Our first distribution from the Radhaban centre took place on the 24th August. Reports have not yet reached us.

Our work in Assam will have to continue for 5 or 6 weeks more. At present our weekly expenditure in Assam alone is nearly Rs. 3,000/-. The funds at our disposal, however, are almost depleted. We earnestly appeal to all generous hearts to help us in this extremity. We are confident that our appeal will meet with a prompt response. Contributions, however small, will be thankfully received and acknowledged at the following addresses :

- (1) President, Ramkrishna Mission, Belur Math P.O., Howrah, Bengal.
- (2) Manager, Udbodhan Office, 1, Mukherji Lane, Baghbazar, Calcutta.
- (3) Manager, Advaita Ashrama, 182A, Muktaram Babu Street, Calcutta.

## Supplement to Prabuddha Bharata

We thankfully acknowledge receipt of the following donations for Assam flood relief, from 22nd June to 31st July, 1929.

	Rs. A. P.		Rs. A. P.
Sj. Basanta Kumar Chatterji ...	10 0 0	Secy., Bar Association, Burdwan	25 0 0
„ Ganga Charan Mukherji ...	25 0 0	Sj. Benode Behari Maity ...	25 0 0
„ N. R. Banerji ...	10 0 0	„ N. N. Sen Gupta ...	30 0 0
„ Dharendra Nath Ganguli ...	4 0 0	„ B. Chandra ...	10 0 0
„ M. M. Dhar ...	5 0 0	„ P. C. Majumdar ...	5 0 0
„ Panchanan Pal ...	10 0 0	Members, Executive Engineer's	
Secretary, Rangpur Loan Office	50 0 0	Office, Midnapur ...	4 2 0
Sj. Harendra Nath Chakravarty	35 0 0	Sm. Kadamhini Dutta ...	4 0 0
„ Visindas Dewandas ...	10 0 0	Sj. Fakir Chandra Ghose ...	1 0 0
„ Satya Charan Ghose ...	5 0 0	A friend ...	10 0 0
„ Benode Behari Ray ...	5 0 0	Sj. Nani Lal Chakravarty ...	5 0 0
Paksey Vivekananda Chhatra		Sm. Annapurna Devi ...	1 0 0
Sangha ...	10 0 0	Sj. Basanta Kumar Ghose ...	2 0 0
Do. (2nd instalment) ...	31 0 0	„ Charu Chandra Bose ...	50 0 0
Secy., Ponabalia Relief Com-		„ J. M. Sen ...	1 0 0
mittee ...	10 0 0	„ B. K. Bose ...	1 0 0
Sj. S. P. Banerji ...	2 0 0	„ Ashutosh Banerji ...	1 0 0
Miss Rama Pramanik ...	5 0 0	Parsee Bagan R. K. Society ...	9 0 0
Mr. Shyam Sundar ...	5 0 0	Sir Gurudas Institute ...	35 0 0
Non-official Relief Committee		Sj. Sarat Chandra Mallik ...	5 0 0
with R. K. Sevashrama,		Sympathiser ...	50 0 0
Tamiluk ...	150 0 0	Sj. S. C. Dutt ...	25 0 0
Sm. Santoshini Devi ...	5 0 0	„ Sushil Chandra Sen ...	25 0 0
Secy., R. K. Sevashram,		„ I. C. Ghose ...	10 0 0
Sarishabari ...	50 0 0	„ J. M. Chowdhuri ...	10 0 0
Sm. Moni Kumari ...	5 0 0	„ B. K. Biswas ...	10 0 0
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(Sd.) SWAMI SIDDHANANDA,  
Secretary, R. K. Mission.

25-8-1929.







SWAMI PREMANANDA

# Prabuddha Bharata

OCTOBER, 1929

Volume XXXIV



Number 10

“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।”

“Arise ! Awake ! And stop not till the Goal is reached.”

## UNPUBLISHED LETTERS OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

XVIII

(To a Western Disciple)

SWITZERLAND,  
August, 1896.

Be you holy and above all sincere and do not for a moment give up your trust in the Lord and you will see the light. Whatever is truth will remain forever ; whatever not, none can preserve. We are helped in being born in a time when everything is quickly searched out. Whatever others think or do, lower not your standard of purity, morality and love of God ; above all beware of all secret organizations. No one who loves God need fear any jugglery. Holiness is the highest and divinest power in earth and in heaven. “Truth alone triumphs, not untruth. Through truth alone is opened the way to God.” Do not care for a moment who joins hands with you or not, be sure that you touch the hand of the Lord. That is enough. . . . .

I went to the glacier of Monte Rosa yesterday and gathered a few hardy flowers growing almost in the midst of eternal snow. I send you one in this letter hoping that you will attain to a similar spiritual hardihood amidst all the snow and ice of this earthly life. . . . .

Your dream was very, very beautiful. In dream our souls read a layer of our mind which we do not read in our waking hours, and however unsubstantial imagination may be, it is behind the imagination that all unknown psychic truths lie. Take heart. We will try to do what we can for the good of humanity,—the rest depends upon the Lord. . . . .

Well, do not be anxious, do not be in a hurry. Slow, persistent and silent work does everything. The Lord is great. We will succeed, my boy. We must. Blessed be His Name ! . . . .

Here in America are no Ashramas. Would there was one! How would I like it and what an amount of good it would do to this country!!!

## XIX

(To an American Friend)

ALAMEDA, CALIFORNIA,  
12th April, 1900.

. . . . . Mother is becoming propitious once more. Things are looking up. They must.

Work always brings evil with it. I have paid for the accumulated evil with bad health. I am glad. My mind is all the better for it. There is a mellowness and a calmness in life now, which was never there before. I am learning now how to be attached as well as detached, and mentally becoming my own master. . .

Mother is doing Her own work; I do not worry much now. Moths like me die by the thousand every instant. Her work goes on all the same. Glory unto Mother! . . . Alone and drifting about in the will-current of the Mother, has been my whole life. The moment I have tried to break this, that moment I have been hurt. Her will be done! . . .

I am happy, at peace with myself, and more of the Sannyasin than I ever was before. The love for my own kith and kin is growing less every day, and that for Mother increasing. Memories of long nights of vigil with Sri Ramakrishna under the Dakshineswar Banyan are waking up once more. And work? What is work? Whose work? Whom shall I work for?

I am free. I am Mother's child. She works, She plays. Why should I plan? What should I plan? Things came and went, just as She liked, without my planning, in spite of my planning. We are Her automata. She is the wirepuller.

## WOMEN AND THE ARTS

By SISTER NIVEDITA

We talk a great deal of what is to be taught us. Why do we not glance occasionally at what we ought to learn for ourselves? National restoration may involve a *recoiler pour mieux sauter* (a recoil in order to leap better), but national restoration cannot take place by mere imitation of the past. For the strength gathered in that past we have now to find new applications. Are the old industries dead? Then, with the craft-dexterity and wisdom which they bred in us, let us invent new industries. The women's occupations are vanishing curiously. The old incised clay for

dishes, the old modellings for worship, the nice floor-ornaments for the threshold, are less and less needed. But the power that produced these things is still there. Let it now become the mother of great Indian schools of design and sculpture. Let us open our eyes to the true ambitions. In some ages woman is admired for her ignorance and touching *naïveté*. In others she is equally praised for her learning. The one sentimentality is as useless as the other. Each is merely a fashion. The true question is: what knowledge, what power, what self-discipline and creative impulse has the

race developed in this or that direction, by each one of its children?

For a great school of needlework we require only that the energy of the intellect should be added to that training of hand and eye, which a hundred communities of craftsmen in India, and every Hindu woman in her home in some degree already possess. But who has thought of this subject as providing matter for the intellect at all? Who has thought of the historical learning that might be concentrated upon it, of the geographical knowledge that it might be made to involve? It may be that in this great synthesis and study of the past, the exquisite originality of Kashmir and Benares, of the Mohammedan woman and the Hindu craftsman, would dissolve away like dew before sunrise. But at least they would earn a nobler passing now that they are losing their character in vulgar adaptations for the European market. And if we may argue from analogy, there is no proof that the rise of synthetic study destroys local imagination when the latter continues to be the minister of any deep undying conviction of the larger order. In Europe to-day, needlework is a living art, because the Church and the doctrine of the Church continue to demand its perpetual illustration. Indeed a fresh accession of energy has enriched it in certain directions, it would seem, coincident with the revival of genuine medievalism in religious faith.

In India, the inspiration that waits to find realisation and adornment in beautiful needlework is that of the civil and national life. What ecclesiasticism has been to England with her political commonplaceness, that the political life is about to be to India. Hitherto we cannot think of any application of embroidery that has not been personal or domestic. In the time to come, however, we shall find ourselves ransacking the treasures of the past, and the imagination of all lands, in order to find material with which

to express the enthusiasm of Humanity. It will be an Indian enthusiasm, and for its nature and the ancient monuments will be studied afresh. Each suggestion, each *motif*, will be worked up. The dawning idea will pour itself out in a thousand forms. Each hamlet will have its banners; each officer of the national life his regal robe, and in the temples the vestments of the gods will be as piously collected and as rigorously treasured as the ancient texts. For these things are symbols of achievement and aspiration, and not the puerile vanities they seem. We must learn to understand and express in unknown forms the national instinct for splendour. Each people, its history, literature, art, and religion, has to be sympathetically known and understood, before we can fully appreciate and distinguish the art-needlework of a Belgian convent side by side with that of the Turkish zenana or the Chinese home. Only a deep and living knowledge of thought and feeling can enable us to place our symbolism rightly. And symbolism wrongly used always becomes a vulgarity. The red roses of Bokhara and the golden lilies of France are instances of what we call the political or national use of needlework. Catholic altars furnish innumerable specimens of its religious value. And the treasures of princes, East and West, demonstrate its importance among the arts of luxury. The great bulk of its achievements the world over has belonged to the last-named class alone. It is for women in India to-day to redeem one of the most beautiful of the arts from so undesired a negligence, and fill it with the fulness of their imagination and tenderness. Why should we not realise that a thing into which we have put our own taste and our own works, is with all its imperfectness, a nobler offering of affection than anything that could be bought in the market? Why should the Mussulman woman who vows a *chadder* of flowers to the honoured dead, not promise instead to work the

blossoms with her own little tireless hands on some dainty fabric? Let the rich and aged offer glistening silk threads and cloth of gold, and let the young and devout ply the needle back and forth till the task is done.

It may be many would be needed to co-operate in the task year after year. The tapestries of feudal castles in Europe were made by successive generations of labour in the women's bower. Why should Hindu women, similarly, not hand themselves together, to work banners for the Durga processions at the Puja? Why should these ceremonies not be made increasingly fine and imposing in each respect year after year? It would not do to copy either design or colours from the horrible "made in Germany" school of pictures at present in vogue. There would need to be a patient searching of Benares and Rajputana for specimens of a finer age as models. But few subjects would lend themselves so rapidly as Durga to a magnificent treatment with the needle. The same difficulty would not be encountered in designing banners for the use of the Vaishnava *sankirtan*. In the bazars even of Calcutta to-day, one comes now and then on the fragile little brush-work pictures of Radha and Krishna standing against a yellow sky under a black tree,—pictures which are examples of a very fine though unconscious order of decoration. The painter of the Indian bazar uses yellow here for exactly the same reason that made Cimabue use gold,—to indicate the sacredness of the subject.

There is a touching custom prevalent amongst Bengali women, of working slippers for their husband's wearing. Unfortunately, at present the models imitated are generally atrocities of the rankest kind. But these would go out of fashion, if a larger knowledge came in, to feed a nobler imagination and sense of beauty. And why should slippers form the solitary offering? Why not an exquisite cover for some favourite book, or some article

for the writing-desk, or if the recipient be a woman, for the work-basket? Out of a worn-out *sari* or *chadder*, once precious, one might cut enough stuff to cover a blotting book, or make a bag, and work upon it with one's own needle a name or a date. As we search for ornament, we may perhaps find on some brass vessel a pattern suggesting a border or decorative panel. Or we may deliberately attempt to copy a fragment of Chinese or Mohammedan workmanship. In doing the last, we are beginning in the finest way that deeper study of the art which might ultimately make us largely and permanently useful to others. It would be better to postpone indefinitely the imitation of such European patterns as we can get. In almost every case, the specimens of European taste, that have yet reached the East are of the most low and degraded kind, and nothing can be more painful than the roses, forget-me-nots, and coloured alphabets, in Berlin wool-work and aniline-dyed crewel silks, on which Bengali women, of judgment and dignity in other respects, can be content to waste their time.

In the attempt to popularise art-needlework one is not unaware of the danger involved. The horror of embroidered tea-cloths and crocheted antimacassars is before us every day. The rage for useless rubbish and the multiplication of unnecessary ornament is vulgar and inartistic, not a service of the beautiful or the true.

Moreover, there is a real necessity in the present stage of women's education, for introducing varied manual occupations. A development of brain without hand, of word without deed, of thinking without power of initiation and sustained action, will prove almost entirely retrogressive. It is most undesirable that a woman should go blind, as has happened so often amongst the peasants in Venetia or in Normandy, in the effort to produce beautiful lace. Yet unless the notion of perfection for its own sake

can speak to our girls through the new opportunities of the present, as it has in those of the past, there cannot

be true education. And from such a gain even a case of blindness now and again should not deter us.

## A CALL TO THE ETERNAL

By THE EDITOR

### I

Life progresses by continual affirmation and negation. If we are to understand the proper value and significance of a thing, we have to observe it with a detached vision. By renouncing we gain. Our day's work would have lost all charm and ground down our soul, if we had not the oblivion of the nightly sleep. This is a truth, the profundity of which often escapes us. We think that to do the best in anything we must be attached to it. We forget that attachment binds and to that extent limits our powers and capacity to accomplish. It is in the inner detachment that we go beyond limitations and our being flows in unimpeded streams.

This is more true of the wider phases of life. Hence the ideal of *Vānaprastha*. After life's long work, a weariness seizes the soul, a weariness which is really a re-creation. We no longer feel attracted by the hurry and bustle of action. It all seems empty and valueless. What is there in earning money and bringing up children? So the soul turns back. It withdraws itself from the external world into the silence of the meditation of the Eternal; and there it finds its solace. We do not like the society of men. It seems so superficial! We want to find the deeper companionship of the Soul of our soul. A new being emerges within our own self. We are enthralled by its peace and beauty, and its gleams cast a healing influence on our lacerated heart. We deny the world, the external, and find the greater truth and reality of the inner self and the peace and richness thereof. Henceforth we turn our back on the world and its

multifarious duties, and the finding of the soul is our only quest.

A step further and there is the ideal of *Sannyāsa*. Why should one spend the best part of life and energy to learn the truth that after all life is an empty dream and that the reality is elsewhere? There are some who are born with the instinctive consciousness of the truth. They do not require to pass through the grinding mill of the world to reach the gate of truth. They stand before the gate itself and they enter it as early as possible. The world is false, they know. And they have nothing to do with it. The only reality is God. To find Him, to know Him, to be absorbed in Him, that is their only quest.

Thus there is a deep feeling in every Hindu's mind that the life that the average man is living, is not a natural one. Action is not the natural condition of man. Inaction, a state beyond all change and necessity of change, is his true and permanent condition. Compared with that eternal state, the millions of lives through which the soul passes to reach the state of eternal beatitude, are nothing but a moment. The Eternity looms so vast and substantial before the Hindu mind that it cannot but consider that to be the reality, and the relative life as unreal. All his efforts, therefore, are directed to transcending all limitation, and losing himself in the Infinite. He looks upon the world and its concerns with an amused eye. He cannot take them so seriously. It is more or less a fun, he thinks. To act is not our vocation. To think or feel also is not our nature. To be, that is our true nature. To be,

to become the Eternal, beyond all change and necessity of change, that is the goal.

## II

How the Hindu thought stultifies itself!—we hear the horrified critic exclaim. How can such a nation live and prosper?—he asks. Alas for the critic, the ways of life and reality are mysterious. It works its ways through contradiction. The greatest generalisation of the relative reality is perhaps that it is self-contradictory. That is why we said that life progresses by continual affirmation and negation. It is because the Hindu is so intent on forgetting life that life is eternal in India. Which race on the face of the earth is so enigmatically permanent as the Hindu? It rises revived phoenix-like from every foreign invasion. Every period of depression has been followed by a period of every greater prosperity. What is the secret source of its perpetual life? The Hindu's denial of life. God is not attached to the creation. Therefore the cycle of creation is never-ending. This is the blessed contradiction. Let us be the eternal; and life's rich creation will never know any end.

So to-day we want to forget everything,—our domestic problems, our social and economic troubles, our political distresses, our national degradation and the international vagaries. We want to deny and forget everything. These are all vanity. What is the reality behind them?—Nothing. The world itself is false, how can its goings-on be true? They weary the soul. No doubt from our present limited view-point, the universe is tremendously real. To-day our life is beset with problems. The nation is crying in agony. There is no end of suffering. But all these are true only to a certain point. Beyond that, they do not exist. And it is the call of the Beyond that is insistent to-day.

We have so often inflicted the thoughts of the passing world on our

readers that we hope we shall be excused if for once we call them to the Beyond. Yes, we must also have the power and the heart to look unconcerned on the suffering world. "Let the dead bury the dead. Do thou follow Me." This contradiction is the sustenance of our existence. Were we to exhaust ourselves on the surface of the Being, our life would be hollow and disconsolate. Fortunately, we can withdraw ourselves from the ramifications of the surface and dive deep. So let this thought be uppermost in our mind always,—to dive deep, to deny the relative existence, and to be absorbed in the Absolute. It is natural with us at present to lose ourselves in the multifarious thoughts and activities of the relative life. We do not require to make efforts to plunge into them. We *are* always in them. We are continually being dragged on by them. What we require is to be disengaged from their tentacles. For that we require to make Herculean efforts. For lives and lives, for millions of births, we have been habituated to live on the surface, so much so that the changing aspects of being now appear to us as the essence of Being itself. We are hypnotised. This deep-rooted habit cannot be overcome in a day. Tremendous struggle is needed to overcome the lures of the relative life, and they cannot be overcome once for all. They rise powerful again and again from their defeat. An alert eye has to be kept on them. Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty. What should we do? Is it not clear that the greatest part of our energy is to be devoted to the denial of the relative life and being, so that our mind may learn to abide forever in the Eternal? It is for this that we must make real efforts.

Let a weariness seize our soul. Let us be weary of the distractions of life. But that weariness should be genuine; that is to say, it must not be negative, it must be at the same time a re-creation. A new, deeper and larger aspect of being must appear in the

quiet of that weariness. This weariness is *Vairāgya*. Let the relativities blow away like a passing storm and the Eternal shine clear before our vision. Let us create a storm in our life that it may blow away all the dust and cobwebs which at present blur our vision of the reality.

### III

So long as there is death, we cannot rest content with our present conditions. The life of the Eternal and the insistent silent call thereof may be ridiculed. Nice arguments may be put forward to prove that there is nothing beyond the perceptible universe. Arguments can be fought by counter-arguments. There is no conclusion or conviction that way. But the grim death! Death is the arch argument. Is destruction the end of everything? Our whole soul revolts against the idea of annihilation. Continuity of existence is the most cherished desire of our heart. It is on the assured truth of that hope that we build our entire life. There would be no meaning in our present activities, in our moral efforts, in serving the suffering humanity, in loving men, in the pursuit of knowledge, if there were no *post mortem* existence. If this life were all, if the visible reality were the only reality, there would have been no meaning in them. What is the standard by which to judge right and wrong and determine duty? But the moment we assume that there is an aspect of being, in the realisation of which lies our greatest happiness and fulfilment, we find meaning in our present life and activity, we know that that which hampers the realisation of the Eternal is wrong and that which helps, is right.

But how do we know that death is not the end of everything? Where is the surety that there is existence beyond death? Mere hope or assurance is nothing. We must each of us prove it to ourselves. And no inferential proof will do. We must *become the*

eternal existence. We must realise ourselves as eternal and immortal. That alone will convince. And to become immortal we must renounce and transcend the finite and mortal. We must deny them in order to reach the Infinite. Here is another mystery of the soul's progress. There is no development properly so-called. There is only continual manifestation through denials. We deny the lower being in order to express the higher. We have to deny, and not hug it to our bosom. There are as it were innumerable layers of being, each of which contradicts the others, so that it tends to assume an aspect of sovereignty. That is the reason why while we are in one plane of being, the other planes seem non-existent. This peculiarity of our psychological being we must ever bear in mind. It is useless to try to harmonise. We have to deny continually.

If, then, we are to realise our immortal being, we must deny our mortal aspect. We have to renounce the mortal life and its relations. We must die to live. Renunciation,—that is the watchword. Thus even to substantiate our present life, we must taste of immortality. Otherwise there will not be any enthusiasm. But he who has tasted immortality, can he feel any enthusiasm for the relative life? It is said by those who know that the substance of the relative world is Divinity itself. The Divine as it were has put on the garb of name and form and is appearing variegated. To us, however, the Divine substance is hidden. As our spiritual vision grows clear, we begin to perceive the Divinity as enclosed within the names and forms. And then with the growing spiritual perception, the underlying unity of all things becomes more and more patent. The names and forms are as it were divested of their Divine substance. They become empty, shadow-like, and the Divinity emerges clear of those entanglements. The Divinity exists by itself. We also feel ourselves separate from the sheaths of body and mind, as



pure spirit, one with the Divinity. It so happens, therefore, that the man of realisation can no more interest himself in the shadowy relativities. He is lost in the Eternal. Time can no longer lure him back into its clasp.

#### IV

So, on and on in our pursuit of the Eternal. "Let the dead bury the dead." Let us forget the world, and with one-pointed devotion meditate on the Eternal Lord. That is the only life worth living. We are not unaware that to abide in the Eternal is not easy. We know that it is extremely difficult to deny the present life. What are we to do? *We must practise daily.* Just as our nightly sleep is the denial of our feverish activities of the day, so let one part of our mind deny the worldly preoccupations of the other part. Let one part of our energy and time be devoted in contradistinction to the denial of our worldly pursuits and the meditation of the Absolute. We must continue this way from day to day, year to year; and we must try to give more and more time and energy and mind to God than to the world, till God engulfs our whole time and being.

We feel that the sentiments and ideas expressed here will jar on many of our national workers. Many of them have again and again charged religion with its preoccupations with the Eternal as one of the causes of India's downfall. We feel like retorting: What does it matter? Are we to judge everything by material prosperity and political freedom? If there is truth in religion, religion must be practised in spite of India's downfall and other things. If there is the Eternal which is the Soul of our soul, should we seek the Eternal or material prosperity? They know little of the secrets of the soul who believe that human nature can be attached permanently to temporal pursuits. They know only the surface of the mind. The great depths are unknown and non-existent to them.

But of course, we shall not retort that way. We want to point out that pre-occupation with God is not harmful even to national work. It is useless to try to convince those who do not believe in religion. But those who do and yet want incessant work and no communion with the Eternal, are self-deluded. Such workers may be good enough for hurry and bustle, but they are not solid men themselves; and their work will be lacking in far-reaching influence. They will only move on the surface. The deep powers of the soul are hidden for them and they cannot bring them to bear on their work. If they want to produce lasting results, unblemished by vicious errors, they must abide a long time everyday with God in the silence of their soul, and then their vision will be clear and feelings and actions free from error. But it is no joke to realise the silence pregnant with the Divine. One must try to withdraw the senses from their objects, and the mind from its multifarious thoughts and emotions. How hard it is to do this, only those who try know. One must practise regularity, at certain hours of the day. Thus through long practice, the mind may be habituated to remain balanced even amidst outward preoccupations.

So here again, we are faced by the truth that our main work is the denial of the earthly life. So long as we believe the world activities, even the service of men, to be utmost real, how can we acquire the power to deny them? There must be the strong conviction within us that God after all is the only reality and nothing else exists. Without that conviction, the outgoing tendencies and powers of the mind cannot be checked and concentrated.

#### V

It is not a fantastic pose we are assuming here. Life is a bundle of contradictions. We are only drawing the pointed attention of our readers to two supreme facts which we may easily

forget: (1) We must never forget that the only thing that exists, and the only reality worth seeking is God. Neither the solving of social, national or international problems, nor the service of humanity, is the ultimate goal. The highest goal is the realisation of God; and the knowledge of God and the knowledge of the world cannot co-exist. (2) The service of men and the alleviation of human suffering is best done by not concentrating conscious attention on them, but by the indirect action of a mind, itself lost in God. The greatest servers of humanity, the saints, prophets and Incarnations, have all been unconscious workers. *Consciously* their only quest has been God, not as revealed in nature or humanity, but as He is in Himself. But because they lived with God alone, their influence was the most potent on men. Had they divided their mind between men and God, they would have been less effective in their influence on mankind. This is the secret,—subjectively, they lived only for God, and therefore objectively, they served men best.

But that is not also the whole truth. The men of God become more and more like God Himself. They become impregnated by the Divine nature, or rather they become Divine as they become absorbed in and identified with God. What do we find of God? This creation is held together and every moment rejuvenated, not by the intervention of God in the human fashion, but subtly, mysteriously, by His mere presence. So the men of God nourish the being of men by their proximity, indirectly, unconsciously. But God also destroys. Playfully He brings into being this infinitely various universe, and playfully He destroys it. So there are two opposite movements of the soul. In one it finds the whole universe interpenetrated by God and even the meanest being appears to it as God Himself. It kneels before it in ecstatic adoration, and its love and service know no end. In another, it finds the

variegated universe as empty shadow, unreal, false, and God as the transcendental reality. And then the world is forgotten. There is no question of love or service.

These twin aspects of the soul-life are prominently manifest in all great lives. We always find in the great saints, the alternate expression of all-sweeping love and complete indifference. If we consider carefully, we shall find that the last days of a saint's life are often characterised by a deeper absorption in God and complete indifference to the relative life, to serve which perhaps he dedicated the best part of his life and energy. It is due to no disgust or consciousness of task fulfilled. It is merely the assertion of the alternate aspect of the soul-life. To realise the world as Divine and to find it shadowy are but alternate aspects of the same great experience to which God alone is real.

These truths of the soul-life are applicable also to us ordinary men. Our life also must have these twin aspects. No doubt, in our present state, we cannot totally forego activities, internal and external. But we must not lose sight of the ultimate truth, and we must, in accordance with it, try to realise both these aspects in our life. —We must act and serve in the spirit of worship; but we must know at the same time that all this is vanity, —the world and its concerns are false and unreal and that God alone is real. And thus we must every day sit in meditation again and again, withdrawing our consciousness from everything and applying it on God, who is the Soul of our soul and who abides in our inmost being. Without the latter aspect, the former will be false and superficial. But the latter stands by itself. The instinct of the Hindu mind that our true nature is transcendental and actionless is literally true. That is the goal towards which all our efforts should be directed. May we be lost more and more in the transcendental glory of the Lord!

## THE DIARY OF A DISCIPLE

30TH APRIL, 1913.

It was afternoon at the Belur Monastery. The disciple asked Swami Brahmananda: "Mahârâj, I have been asked to repeat the name of the Lord and meditate on Him at the same time. But I cannot meditate at all. And this often makes me extremely dejected. I have found that I may meditate in three different ways: *first*, I can concentrate my mind on some particular part of the Object of meditation,—on His feet, eyes, or face; *secondly*, I may concentrate on Him part by part, from His feet to head and head to feet, and repeat the process several times; and *thirdly*, I may simply meditate on the whole of Him as sitting on the lotus of my heart. As regards the third process, I find that I cannot realise His image clearly, but only shadow-like. Nevertheless the feeling that He is sitting on my heart gives me great joy. Kindly tell me which is the most effective among these three processes."

Swami: "It is better you put these questions to your Guru. It may be my answers will not be identical with hers. She will soon come to Calcutta. . . . It is natural that you will feel depressed now and then. I also once felt like that while I was at Dakshineswar. I was very young then, and the Master was about fifty years old. Naturally I could not always speak out all I felt to him. One day I was meditating in the Kali temple. I could not concentrate my mind. This made me very sad. I said to myself: 'I have been living here so long, yet I have achieved little. What shall I engage myself with? Very well, I shall not tell anything to the Master. I shall wait two or three days more. If I find that my condition has not changed by then, I shall return home. There I shall have many things with

which to occupy my mind.' So I thought and returned to the Master's room. The Master was then walking in the veranda. On seeing me he entered his room. It was then our custom to salute him after returning from the Kali temple and then take a spare breakfast. Accordingly I saluted him. But as I stood up, he said: 'As you returned from the shrine, I found that your mind was as it were enmeshed.' I understood that he knew all. So I said: 'You know everything. Yes, my mind has become really like that.' He then wrote something on my tongue. And at once all my previous feelings vanished from my mind and I was overwhelmed with an inexpressible joy.

"So long as I lived with him, I used to have spontaneous recollection and contemplation of God. An ecstatic joy used to fill me always. That is why one requires a powerful Guru,—one who has realised God. The Guru and disciple should test each other for a long time before the Guru initiates the disciple. Otherwise there may be regrets afterwards. For this is no passing relationship.

"If any one wants to be my disciple, I at first send him away. If he persists, I give him a Holy Name and ask him to repeat that Name one thousand times everyday for one year. I have found that many are frightened away even by this prescription. . . . One has to work hard in initiating a disciple. First of all one must find out the real *Mantra* and *Ista* of the disciple;\* and that is a hard task. One day, one came to be initiated by

\*The psychic and psychological development of a man makes the worship of a particular aspect of the Divinity most suitable for his spiritual growth. God in that aspect is his *Ista*. Every such aspect has a corresponding mystic formula. That is the *mantra*.

me. I thought that if I could know his *Ista* in meditation, I would initiate him, otherwise not. So I sat in meditation. After an hour's meditation, an image arose in my mind. The disciple afterwards said that that indeed was the Divine form he liked best. . . . Nowadays most men do not do anything after initiation. It is not good to initiate one and all indiscriminately.

"Go on practising hard. At first spiritual practice is like drudgery,—like learning the alphabet. By and by you will have peace. For two or three years, I do not listen, if any one complains that he has not attained anything by initiation. After that he himself acknowledges that he is progressing. It is nothing to hurry about. Practise for two or three years. Then you will see."

MAY, 1913.

A scriptural class used to be held in the Visitors' Room at the Belur Math every afternoon at three (except on Sundays), in which the monks as well as the visitors used to join. Once during the first week of May, Swami Premananda said at the end of the class:

"One day Gosainji came to the Master and begged him to free him from lust. The Master touched him. That touch produced wonderful results. On another occasion, another came and said to Sri Ramakrishna: 'Sir, I feel so attracted by my wife that I cannot devote my mind to any other thing. All my business is going to rack and ruin. Please change my mental condition.' 'Very well,' the Master replied, 'bring some fruits one day. I shall eat up your *māyā*.' When the fruits were brought, however, the Master could not eat them, for try though he would, he could not raise them to his lips. I am told the man suffered a great deal for his wife afterwards."

R. came from Dakshineswar. He had long lived with and served the Master and had often sent him to ecstasy by

singing sweet songs. He was, therefore, dearly loved by the Order of Ramakrishna. Swami Brahmananda had a great love for him and began to make great fun with him. In course of conversation R. said:

"Formerly, the Master and Hriday used to live in the large room of the *Kuthi* (a building in the Dakshineswar Temple) and the Master's mother used to sleep in an adjoining small room. Many nights they used to hear a man with shoes on going up and downstairs, and opening doors and windows. It was a ghost,—possibly of a European. For the *Kuthi* had been a European residence before the Temple was built. The Master used to say: 'We cannot say that this world is entirely false. For we are actually seeing it with our eyes. Nor can we say that it is real. For just see how this garden has changed. Formerly it was a graveyard, and this *Kuthi*, the house of a European. But now! And some days after, this Temple also will vanish, and who knows what will come next?'"

"One day he said to me: 'Once I had a vision, in which I saw many dancing round the Divine Mother, clapping their hands and crying "Victory to Kali!" "Victory to Kali!" and Rani Rasmani standing in the south-west corner of the room. Among those dancing were Mathur, Sambhu, Balaram, Joygopal Sen and others, and also some white men and women whom I do not know yet.'"

Swami Premananda: "They were Westerners. An Western lady came here one day. When she was shown the relics of Sri Ramakrishna, she began to cry. She took a small bit of one of the momentos. She said she would ever keep it in her bosom."

At night a class was held on *Rāja Yoga*. When it was over, Swami Premananda said to the monks: "Merely reading all these won't do. You must meditate on these and build your life upon them. None of you who have come here through the grace of the Lord, are insignificant. You are

all lion-cubs. It won't be enough for you to say to people that you *know* this and that or Swamiji had said so and so. You must demonstrate the

validity of these teachings with your own life. Every one of you must be a model of Renunciation, Discrimination and Dispassion."

## BUILDERS OF UNITY\*

By ROMAIN ROLLAND

### DAYANANDA SARASVATY

Indian religious thought had raised a purely Indian Samaj against Keshab's Brahmo Samaj and against all attempt at Westernisation, even during his lifetime, and at its head was a personality of the highest order, Dayananda Sarasvaty<sup>1</sup> (1824-1883).

This man with the nature of a lion is one of those, whom Europe is too apt to forget when she judges India, but whom she will probably remember later to her cost; for he was that rare combination, a thinker of action<sup>2</sup> with a genius for leadership, like Vivekananda after him.

While all the religious leaders of whom we have already spoken and shall speak in the future were and are from Bengal, Dayananda came from

quite a different land, the same which half a century later gave birth to Gandhi—the north-west coast of the Arabian Sea. He was born in Gujerat, at Morvi in the State of Kathiawar, of a rich family belonging to the highest grade of Brahmins,<sup>3</sup> no less versed in Vedic learning than in mundane affairs, both political and commercial. His father took part in the government of the little native state. He was rigidly orthodox according to the letter of the law with a stern domineering character, which last to his sorrow he passed on to his son.

As a child Dayananda was therefore brought up under the strictest Brahman rule, and at the age of eight was invested with the sacred thread and all the severe moral obligations entailed by this privilege and rigorously enforced by his family.<sup>4</sup> It seemed as if he was to become a pillar of orthodoxy in his turn, but instead he was to be the Samson, who pulled down the pillars of the temple, a striking example among a hundred others of the vanity of human effort, when it imagines that it is possible by a superimposed education to fashion the mind of the rising generation and so dispose of the future. The most certain result is revolt.

That of Dayananda is worth recording. When he was fourteen his father took him to the temple to celebrate

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<sup>1</sup> His real name, abandoned by himself, was Mulshankar. Sarasvaty was the surname of his Guru, whom he regarded as his true father. For Dayananda's life it is necessary to consult the classical book of Lajpat Rai (the great nationalist Indian leader, who has just died): *The Arya Samaj*, with an introduction by Sidney Webb, Longmans, Green & Co., London, 1915.

<sup>2</sup> But although the energy of the two men, the immense power of their preaching and their irresistible attraction for the masses were equal, in Vivekananda's case there was the additional fascination of profundity of soul, the desire for pure contemplation, the bent of the inner being towards constant flights against which his necessity for action had always to struggle. Dayananda did not know this tragic division of soul. Nevertheless he was all that was required for the task he had to accomplish.

<sup>3</sup> Samavedi, the highest order of Brahmins in the Veda.

<sup>4</sup> The vows of Brahmacharya, chastity, purity, poverty throughout student life, and the obligation to recite the Vedas daily, and to live according to a whole system of regular and very strict rites.

the great festival of Shiva. He had to pass the night after a strict fast in pious vigil and prayer. The rest of the faithful went to sleep. The young boy alone resisted its spell. Suddenly he saw a mouse nibbling the offerings to the god and running over Shiva's body. It was enough. There is no doubt about moral revolt in the heart of a child. In a second his faith in the idol was shattered for the rest of his life. He left the temple, went home alone through the night, and from thenceforward refused to participate.<sup>5</sup>

It marked the beginning of a terrible struggle between father and son. Both were of unbending and autocratic will such as barred the door to any mutual concession. At nineteen Dayananda ran away from home to escape from a forced marriage. He was caught and imprisoned. He fled again, this time for ever (1845). He never saw his father again.

For fifteen years this son of a rich Brahman, despoiled of everything and subsisting on alms, wandered as a Sadhu clad in the saffron robe along the roads of India. This again seems like a first edition of Vivekananda's life and his pilgrimage as a young man over the length and breadth of Hindustan. Like him Dayananda went in search of learned men, ascetics, studying here philosophy, there the Vedas, learning the theory and practice of Yoga. Like him he visited almost all the holy places of India and took part in religious debates. Like him he suffered, he braved fatigue, insult and danger, and this contact with the body of his fatherland lasted four times longer than Vivekananda's experience. In contradistinction to the latter, however, Dayananda remained far from the human masses through which he passed, for the simple reason that he spoke nothing but Sanskrit throughout this period. He was indeed as Viveka-

nanda would have been if he had not encountered Ramakrishna and if his high aristocratic and Puritan pride had not been curbed by the indulgent kindness and rare spirit of comprehension of this most human of Gurus. Dayananda did not see, did not wish to see, anything round him but superstition and ignorance, spiritual laxity, degrading prejudices and the millions of idols he abominated. At length about 1860 he found at Mathura an old Guru even more implacable than himself in his condemnation of all weakness and his hatred of superstition, a Sannyasin blind from infancy and from the age of eleven quite alone in the world, a learned man, a terrible man, Swami Virajananda Sarasvaty. Dayananda put himself under his "discipline"<sup>6</sup> which in its old literal XVIIth century sense scarred his flesh as well as his spirit. Dayananda therefore served this untamable and indomitable man for two and a half years as his pupil. It is therefore mere justice to remember that his subsequent course of action was simply the fulfilment of the will of the stern blind man, whose surname he adopted casting his own to oblivion. When they separated Virajananda extracted from him the promise that he would consecrate his life to the annihilation of the heresies that had crept into the Puranic faith, to re-establish the ancient religious methods of the age before Buddha, and to disseminate the truth.

Dayananda immediately began to preach in Northern India, but unlike the benign men of God who open all heaven before the eyes of their hearers, he was like a hero of the Iliad or of the Gita with the athletic strength of a Hercules,<sup>7</sup> who thundered against all

<sup>5</sup> Discipline in the ecclesiastical language of an earlier age meant not only supervision, but the instruments used by ascetics to scourge themselves.

<sup>7</sup> His exploits have become legendary. He stopped with one hand a carriage with two runaway horses. He tore the naked sword

<sup>6</sup> At the present time this night is kept as a festival by the Arya Samaj.

forms of thought other than his own, the only true one. He was so successful that in five years Northern India was completely changed. During these five years his life was attempted four or five times — sometimes by poison. Once a fanatic threw a cobra at his face in the name of Shiva, but he caught it and crushed it. It was impossible to get the better of him; for he possessed an unrivalled knowledge of Sanskrit and the Vedas, while the burning vehemence of his words brought his adversaries to naught. They likened him to a flood. Never since Sankara had such a prophet of Vedism appeared. The orthodox Brahmins, completely overwhelmed, appealed from him to Benares, their Rome. Dayananda went there fearlessly, and accepted in November, 1869, a Homeric contest, where before millions of assailants, all eager to bring him to his knees, he argued for hours together alone against three hundred pandits—the whole front line and the reserve of Hindu orthodoxy.<sup>8</sup> He proved that the Vedanta as practised was diametrically opposed to the primitive Vedas. He claimed that he was going back to the true Word, the pure Law of two thousand years earlier. They had not the patience to hear him out. He was hooted down and excommunicated. A void was created round him, but the echo of such a combat in the style of the Mahabharata spread throughout the country, so that his name became famous in the whole of India.

At Calcutta, where he stayed from December 15, 1872 to April 15, 1873, Ramakrishna met him. He was also cordially received by the Brahmo Samaj. Keshab and his people voluntarily

out of an adversary's hand and broke it in two, etc. His thunderous voice could make itself heard above any tumult.

<sup>8</sup> A Christian Missionary present at this tournament has left an excellent and impartial account of it, reproduced by Lajpat Rai in his book. (*Christian Intelligence*, Calcutta, March, 1870).

shut their eyes to the differences existing between them; they saw in him a rough ally in their crusade against orthodox prejudices and the millions of gods. But Dayananda was not a man to come to an understanding with religious philosophers imbued with Western ideas. His national Indian theism, its steel faith forged from the pure metal of the Vedas alone, had nothing in common with theirs, tinged as it was with modern doubt, which denied the infallibility of the Vedas and the doctrine of transmigration.<sup>9</sup> He broke with them<sup>10</sup> the richer for the encounter, for he owed them<sup>11</sup> the very simple suggestion, whose practical value had not struck him before, that his propaganda would be of little effect unless it was delivered in the language of the people. He went to Bombay, followed shortly afterwards by his mission; and there, following the example of the Brahmo Samaj but with a far better genius for organisation, it proceeded to take root in the social life of India. On April 10, 1875 he founded at Bombay his first Arya Samaj, or Association of the Aryans of India, the pure Indians, the descendants of the old conquering

<sup>9</sup> These two, according to Lajpat Rai, himself affiliated to the Arya Samaj, are "the two cardinal principles which distinguish the Arya Samaj from the Brahmo Samaj."

It must be remembered that twenty years before Dayananda (1844-46), Devendranath had also been tempted by faith in the infallibility of the Vedas, but that he had renounced it, in favour of direct and personal union with God. He was, it is said, of all the chiefs of the Brahmo Samaj the one nearest to Dayananda. But agreement was impossible. Devendranath, whose ideal was peace and harmony, could have no real sympathy with this perpetual warrior, armed with hard dogmatism and applying methods of pure scholasticism to the most modern social conflicts.

<sup>10</sup> In 1877 a last attempt was made to find a basis of agreement between the religious leaders and their divergent doctrines. Keshab and Dayananda met again, but agreement was impossible, since Dayananda would yield nothing.

<sup>11</sup> To Babu Keshab Chunder Sen.

race of the Indus and the Ganges. And it was exactly in those districts that it took root most strongly. From 1877, the year when its principles were definitely laid down at Lahore, to 1883 Dayananda spread a close network over Northern India, Rajputana, Gujerat, the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, and above all in the Punjab, which remained his chosen land. Practically the whole of India was affected. The only province where his influence failed to make itself felt was Madras.<sup>12</sup>

He fell, struck down in his prime, by an assassin. The concubine of a Maharajah, whom the stern prophet had denounced, poisoned him. He died at Ajmere on October 30, 1883.

But his work pursued its uninterrupted and triumphant course. From 40,000 in 1891 the number of its members rose to 100,000 in 1901, to 243,000 in 1911, and to 468,000 in 1921.<sup>13</sup> Some of the most important Hindu personalities, politicians and Maharajahs belonged to it. Its spontaneous and impassioned success in contrast to the slight reverberations of Keshab's Brahmo Samaj, shows the degree to which Dayananda's stern teachings corresponded to the thought of his country and to the first stirrings of Indian nationalism, to which he contributed.

It may perhaps be useful to remind Europe of the reasons at the bottom of this national awakening, now in full flood.

Westernisation was going too far, and was not always revealed by its best side. Intellectually it had become rather a frivolous way of mind, which did away with the need for independence and thought, and transplanted young intelligences from their proper

environment, teaching them to despise the genius of their race. The instinct for self-preservation revolted. Dayananda's generation had watched, as he had done, not without anxiety, suffering, and irritation, the gradual infiltration into the veins of India of superficial European rationalism on the one hand, which with its ironic arrogance understood nothing of the depths of the Indian spirit, and on the other hand a Christianity, which when it entered family life fulfilled only too well Christ's prophecy: "that He had come to bring division between father and son. . . ."

It is certainly not for us to depreciate Christian influence. I am a Catholic by birth, and as such have known the taste of Christ's blood and enjoyed the storehouse of profound life, revealed in the books and in the lives of great Christians, although I am outside all exclusive forms of Church and religion. Hence I do not dream of subordinating such a faith to any other faith whatsoever; but when the soul has reached a certain pitch—*acumen mentis*<sup>14</sup>—it can go no further. Unfortunately the religion of one country does not always work upon alien races through its best elements. Too often questions of human pride are intermingled with the desire for earthly conquest, and so long as victory is attained the view is too often held that the end justifies the means. I will go further and say that, even in its highest presentation, it is very rare that one religion takes possession of the spirit of another race in its deepest essence at the final pitch of the soul, of which I have just spoken. It does so rather, by aspects, very significant no doubt, but secondary in importance. Those of us, who have pored over the wonderful system of Christian metaphysics and sounded their depths, know what infinite spaces they offer

<sup>12</sup> This is all the more striking since it was in Madras that Vivekananda found his most ardent and best organised disciples.

<sup>13</sup> Of whom 223,000 are in the Punjab and Delhi, 205,000 in the United Provinces, 23,000 in Kashmir, 4,500 in Behar. In short it is the expression of Northern India and one of its most energetic elements.

<sup>14</sup> To use the phrase of Richard de Saint-Victor and Western mystics to Francois de Sales. (Cf. Henri Bremond, *The Metaphysics of the Saints*).



for trials of the spirit, and that the Divine Cosmos they present of the Being and the Love dwelling with Him is no whit less vast or less sublime than the conception of the Vedantic Infinite. But if a Keshab caught a glimpse of this, a Keshab was an exception among his people, and it would seem that Christianity is very rarely manifested to Hindus under this aspect. It is presented to them rather as a code of ethics, of practical action, as love in action, if such a term is permissible, and though this is a very important aspect, it is not the greatest.<sup>15</sup> It is a remarkable fact that the most notable conversions have taken place in the ranks of active and energetic personalities rather than in those of deep spiritual contemplation, of men capable of heroic flights of soul.<sup>16</sup>

Whether this is so or not, and it provides a theme for ample discussion, it is a historic fact that when Dayananda's mind was in process of being formed, the best of the Indian religious spirit had been so weakened that the religious spirit of Europe threatened to extinguish its feeble flame without the satisfaction of substituting its own. The Brahmo Samaj was troubled by it, but was itself stamped willy nilly with Western Christianity. Ram Mohun Roy's starting point had been Protes-

tant Unitarianism. Devendranath, although he denied it, had not the strength to prevent its intrusion into the Samaj, when he yielded the ascendancy to Keshab, already three parts given over to it. As early as 1880 one of Keshab's critics<sup>17</sup> could say that "those who believe in him have lost the name of theists, because they lean more and more towards Christianity." However precisely the position of the third Brahmo Samaj (the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj, detached from Keshab) had been defined as against Indian Christianity, Indian public opinion could feel no confidence in a Church undermined by two successive schisms within the space of half a century, and threatened, as we have seen, during the next half century with complete absorption in Christianity.

The enthusiastic reception accorded to the thunderous champion of the Vedas, a Vedist belonging to a great race and penetrated with the sacred writings of ancient India and with her heroic spirit, is then easily explained. He alone hurled the defiance of India against her invaders. Dayananda declared war on Christianity and cleft it asunder with a heavy massive sword with scant reference to the scope or exactitude of his blows. He put it to the test of a vengeful, unjust and injurious criticism, which fastened upon each separate verse of the Bible, blind and deaf to its real religious, or even literal meaning, (for he read the Bible in a Hindi translation and in a hurry!). His slashing commentaries,<sup>18</sup> reminiscent of Voltaire and his *Dictionnaire Philosophique*, have unfortunately remained the arsenal for the spiteful anti-Christianity of certain modern Hindus.<sup>19</sup> Nevertheless, as Glasenapp

<sup>15</sup> I myself, independently and intuitively belong to the side of Salesian Theocentrism, as represented by M. Henri Bremond in a recent polemic against the religious moralism or anti-mysticism of M. l'Abbe Vincent. (*Cf. op. cit.* Vol. I, pp. 26-47).

<sup>16</sup> The Sadhu Sundar Singh, whose name is well-known in Europe among Protestants, is a good example. A Punjab Sikh, the son of a Sirdar and brother of a commander in the army, this intrepid man, delighted in seeking and braving martyrdom in Tibet, where he found traces of other Christian martyrs belonging to the two warlike races, the Sikhs and the Afghans. (*Cf.* Max Schaefer: *Sadhu Sundar Singh*, 1922, Zurich). To judge of him from this pamphlet, it would appear that in speaking of the other religions of India, he had never penetrated to the core of their thought.

<sup>17</sup> *Cf.* Frank Lillington: *The Brahmo and the Arya in their relations to Christianity*, 1901.

<sup>18</sup> Contained in his great work, written in Hindi, *Satyārtha-Prakash* (the Torch of Truth).

<sup>19</sup> Notably the neo-Buddhists, for hardly believable though it is, the beautiful name

rightly remarks, they are of paramount interest for European Christianity, which ought to know what is the exact image of itself as presented by its Asiatic adversaries.

Dayananda had no greater regard for the Koran and the Puranas, and trampled underfoot the body of Brahman orthodoxy. He had no pity for any of his fellow-countrymen, past or present, who had contributed in any way to the thousand year decadence of India, at one time the mistress of the world.<sup>20</sup> He was a ruthless critic of all who, according to him, had falsified or profaned the true Vedic religion.<sup>21</sup> He was a Luther fighting against his own misled and misguided

of Buddha, originally symbolising the spirit of detachment and universal peace, is well on the way in these days to becoming the standard of an aggressive propaganda having scant respect for other beliefs.

<sup>20</sup> His panorama of Indian History is an interesting one, a kind of impassioned Discourse of Universal History, to allude to a celebrated work of Bassuet of the XVIIIth century. It traces the origin of humanity and the domination of India over the entire globe (including America and the Oceanic Islands; for according to him, the Nagas, serpents, and the infernal spirits of the legends are the people of the Antipodes; just so the struggles with the Asuras and the Rakshasas mean the wars with the Assyrians and the Negroids). Dayananda replaces the whole of mythology upon the earth. He dates all the misfortunes of India and the ruin of the great spirit of the Vedas to the wars of ten times a Hundred Years, sung by the Mahabharata, wherein heroic India destroyed herself. . . . He is filled with hatred, not only against the materialism which resulted, but against Jainism, the snobner. For him Sankara was the glorious though unfortunate hero of the first war of Hindu independence in the realm of the soul. He wished to break the bonds of heresy, but he failed. He died in the midst of his campaigns for freedom, but he himself remained caught by Jainistic decoys, particularly by Maya, which inspired in Dayananda—no dreamer of dreams but a man firmly implanted in the soil of reality—an invincible repugnance.

<sup>21</sup> He called all idolatry a sin, and considered that Divine Incarnations were absurd and sacrilegious.

Church of Rome;<sup>22</sup> and his first care was to throw open the wells of the Holy Books, so that for the first time his people could come to them and drink for themselves. He translated and wrote commentaries on the Vedas in the vernacular<sup>23</sup>—truly an epoch-making date for India when a Brahman not only gave to all human beings the right to know the Vedas, whose study had been previously prohibited by orthodox Brahmans, but insisted that their study and propaganda was the duty of every Arya.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>22</sup> He scourged the Brahmans with the name of "popes".

<sup>23</sup> Between 1876 and 1883 he directed a whole train of pandits. He wrote in Sanskrit and the pandits translated into the dialects. He alone, however, translated the original text. His translation, which he had no time to revise, is always preceded by a grammatical and etymological analysis of each verse, followed by a commentary explaining the general sense.

<sup>24</sup> Article III of the Ten Principles of Lahore (1877): "The Vedas are the book of true knowledge. The first duty of every Arya is to learn them and to teach them."

By a strange essay Dayananda concluded a political alliance lasting several years (1879-1881) with a Western community, destined for a great work, the Theosophical Society, on the basis of his vindication of the Vedas against the rising flood of Christianity. The Theosophical Society was founded in 1875 in the South of India by a Russian, Mme. Blavatsky, and an American, Colonel Olcott, and had the great merit of stimulating the Hindus to study their Sacred Texts, especially the Gita and the Upanishads, six volumes of which Colonel Olcott published in Sanskrit. It also headed the movement for the establishment of Indian schools, especially in Ceylon, and even dared to open schools for "untouchables". It therefore contributed to the national, religious, and social awakening of India; and Dayananda seemed about to make common cause with it. But when the Society took him at his word and offered him its regular co-operation, he refused its offer, thereby taking away from the Theosophical Society all chance of spiritual dominion over India. It has since played a secondary part, but has been useful from the social point of view, if the establishment in 1889 of the Central Hindu College at Benares is to be attributed to the influence of Mrs. Besant. The Anglo-American ele-

It is true that his translation was an interpretation, and that there is much to criticise with regard to accuracy<sup>25</sup> as well as with regard to the rigidity of the dogmas and principles he drew from the text, the absolute infallibility claimed for the one Book, which according to him had emanated direct from the "prehuman" or superhuman Divinity, his denials from which there was no appeal, his implacable condemnations, his theism of action, his Credo of battle,<sup>26</sup> and finally his national God.<sup>27</sup>

ment, preponderant in its strange mixture of East and West, has in a curious way twisted the vast and liberal system of Hindu metaphysics by its spirit of noble but limited pragmatism. Further it must be added that it has given itself a kind of pontifical and infallible authority, allowing of no appeal, which though veiled is none the less implacable, and has appeared in this light to independent minds such as that of Vivekananda, who, as we shall see, when he returned from America categorically denounced it.

On this subject there is an article by G. R. Monod Heraen, written in its favour: *An Indo-European Influence, the Theosophical Society* (Feuilles de l'Inde, No. 1. Paris 1928), and a brilliant, comprehensive, and malicious chapter by Count H. Von Keyserling in his *Travel-Diary of a Philosopher*, 1918.

<sup>25</sup> But not his passionate loyalty, which remains proof against all attack.

<sup>26</sup> Among rules to be followed as set down at the end of his *Satyartha Prakash*, Dayananda orders: "Seek to combat, to humiliate, to destroy the wicked, even the rulers of the world, the men in power. Seek constantly to sap the power of the unjust and to strengthen that of the just, even at the cost of the terrible sufferings, of death itself, which no man should seek to avoid."

<sup>27</sup> "The Samaj will glorify, pray to and unite with the One and Only God, as shown by the Vedas. . . The conception of God and the objects of the Universe is founded solely on the teachings of the Vedas and the other true Shastras," which he enumerates.

It is, however, curious (so strong was the current of the age seeking at all cost towards unity) that Dayananda's nationalism like the unitarianism of Roy and Keshab had universal pretensions.

But in default of outpourings of the heart and the calm sun of the spirit, bathing the nations of men and their gods in its effulgence,— in default of the warm poetry radiating from the entire being of a Ramakrishna or the gradiose poetic style of a Vivekananda, Dayananda transfused into the languid body of India his own formidable energy, his certainty, his lion's blood.

"The well-being of humanity as a whole ought to be the objective of the Samaj." (Principles of the first Arya Samaj of 1875).

"The primary object of the Samaj is to do good to the whole world by bettering the physical, spiritual and social condition of humanity." (Principles of the Arya Samaj of Lahore, revised in 1877).

"I believe in a religion based on universal principles and embracing all that has been accepted as truth by humanity and that will continue to be obeyed in the ages to come. This is what I call religion: Eternal Primitive Religion (for it is above the hostility of human beliefs) . . . That alone which is worthy to be believed by all men and in all ages, I hold as acceptable." (*Satyartha Prakash*).

Like all impassioned believers, but in perfect good faith, he confounds the conception of the eternal and universal "Truth", which he claimed to serve, with that of the faith he decreed. He was careful to submit the criterion of truth to five preliminary tests, the first two in conformity with the teachings of the Vedas and to the definitions he had laid down concerning the nature of God and His attributes. How could he doubt his right to impose the Vedas upon humanity as a whole, when he started by decreeing that they contained, as Aurobindo Ghose says, "an integral revelation of religious truth, both ethical and scientific? According to him the Vedic gods were nothing but impersonations describing the one Divinity, and the names of His powers, such as we see them in the works of Nature. True knowledge of the meaning of the Vedas corresponds then to the knowledge of scientific truths discovered by modern research." (Aurobindo Ghose: *The Secret of the Veda*, Arya Review, No. 4. November 15, 1914, Pondicherry).

Dayananda's national exegesis of Vedism let loose a flood of pamphlets, whose object was to restore and reawaken the philosophies, cults, rites and practices of ancient India. There was a passionate reaction of antique ideals against the ideas of the West. (*Cf. Prabuddha Bharata*, November, 1928.)

His words rang with heroic power. He reminded the secular passivity of a people, too prone to bow to fate, that the soul is free and that action is the generator of destiny.<sup>28</sup> He set the example of a complete clearance of all the encumbering growth of privilege and prejudice by a series of hatchet blows. If his metaphysics were dry and obscure,<sup>29</sup> if his theology was narrow and in my opinion retrograde, his social activities and practices were of intrepid boldness. With regard to questions of fact he went further than the Brahmo Samaj, and even further than the Ramakrishna Mission ventures to-day.

His creation, the Arya Samaj, postulates in principle equal justice for all men and all nations, together with equality of the sexes. It repudiates a hereditary caste system, and only recognises professions or guilds, suitable to the complementary aptitudes of men in society -- religion was to have no part in these divisions, but only the service of the state, which assesses the tasks to be performed. The state alone, if it considers it for the good of the community, can raise or degrade a man from one caste to another by way of

reward or punishment. Dayananda wished every man to have the opportunity to acquire as much knowledge as would enable him to raise himself in the social scale as high as he was able. Above all he would not tolerate the abominable injustice of the existence of untouchables, and nobody has been a more ardent champion of their outraged rights. They were admitted to the Arya Samaj on a basis of equality; for the Aryas are not a caste. "The Aryas are all men of superior principles; and the Dasyus are they who lead a life of wickedness and sin."

Dayananda was no less generous and no less bold in his crusade to improve the condition of women, a deplorable one in India. He revolted against the abuses from which they suffered, recalling that in the heroic age they occupied in the home and in society a position at least equal to men. They ought to have equal education,<sup>30</sup> according to him, and supreme control in marriage over the household including the finances. Dayananda in fact claimed equal rights in marriage for men and women, and though he regarded marriage as indissoluble, he admitted the remarriage of widows, and went so far as to envisage a temporary union for women as well as for men for the purpose of having children, if none had resulted from marriage.

Lastly the Arya Samaj, whose eighth principle was "to diffuse knowledge and dissipate ignorance," has played a great part in the education of India. Especially in the Punjab and the United Provinces it has founded a host of schools for girls and boys. Their laborious hives are grouped round two model establishments,<sup>31</sup> the Dayananda

<sup>28</sup> "An energetic and active life is preferable to the acceptance of the decrees of destiny. Destiny is the outcome of deeds. Deeds are the creators of destiny. Virtuous activity is superior to passive resignation. . . ."

"The soul is a free agent, free to act as it pleases. But it depends on the grace of God for the enjoyment of the fruit of its actions." (*Satyartha Prakash*).

<sup>29</sup> Dayananda distinguishes, it seems, three eternal substances—God, the Soul and Prakriti, the material cause of the universe. God and the Soul are two distinct entities: they have attributes which are not interchangeable and each accomplishes certain functions. They are, however, inseparable. The Creation, the essential exercise of Divine Energy, is accomplished over primordial elements, which it combines and orders. The terrestrial bondage of the soul is caused by ignorance. Salvation is emancipation from error and the attainment of the freedom of God. But it is only for a time, at the end of which the soul retakes another body . . . etc. (*Ibid. passim*.)

<sup>30</sup> In marriage the minimum age was to be sixteen for girls and twenty-five for boys. Dayananda was resolutely opposed to infant marriage.

<sup>31</sup> This was our information ten years ago at the date of the publication of Lajpat Rai's book. From that date the educational movement has probably continued to expand.

Anglo-Vedic College of Lahore and the Gurukula of Kangri, national bulwarks of Hindu education, which seek to resuscitate the energies of the race and to use at the same time the intellectual and technical conquests of the West.<sup>32</sup>

To these let us add philanthropic activities, such as orphanages, workshops for boys and girls, homes for widows, and the great works of social service at the time of public calamities, epidemics, famine, etc., and it is obvious that the Arya Samaj is the rival of the future Ramakrishna Mission.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>32</sup> The Dayananda Anglo-Vedic College of Lahore, opened in 1886, combines instruction in Sanskrit, Hindi, Persian, English, Oriental and European Philosophy, History, Political Economy, Science, Arts and Crafts. The Gurukula is a school founded in 1902, where the children take the vow of poverty, chastity and obedience for sixteen years. Its object is to reform the Aryan character by Hindu philosophic and literary culture, vivified by moral energy. There is also a great college for girls in the Punjab, where feminine subjects and domestic economy are united to intellectual studies and the knowledge of three languages, Sanskrit, Hindi and English.

<sup>33</sup> It would seem that Vivekananda and his disciples have here outstripped him. The first activities of social service, noted by Lajpat Rai, as undertaken by the Arya Samaj, was help in the famine of 1897-1898. From 1894 one of the monks of Vivekananda,

I have said enough about this rough Sannyasin with the soul of a leader, to show how great an uplifter of the peoples he was — in fact the most vigorous force of the immediate and present action in India at the moment of the rebirth and reawakening of national consciousness. His Arya Samaj, whether he would or no,<sup>34</sup> prepared the way for the revolt of Bengal in 1905 to which we shall allude again. He was one of the most ardent prophets of reconstruction and of national organisation. He sounded the Reveillé, but in his strength lay also his weakness. His mission in life was action, and his object was the creation of a nation. But the action accomplished and the nation made, everything then remains to be done by other people with a limitless horizon. The whole universe for India will then remain to be created.

Akhandananda, devoted himself to works of social service. In 1897 part of the Ramakrishna Mission was mobilised against famine and malaria, and the following year against the plague. [Of course it is needless to mention that the Ramakrishna Mission does not consider the Arya Samaj as its rival. —Editor, P. B.]

<sup>34</sup> He forbade it publicly; he always claimed to be non-political and non-anti-British. But the British Government judged differently. The Arya Samaj found itself compromised by the activity of its members.

## THE DIFFERENT CONCEPTIONS OF PRALAYA AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS

By KAMAKHYA NATH MITRA, M.A.

From the *pāramārthica* or absolutistic standpoint there is neither *srishti* (projection, emanation or creation) nor *pralaya* (dissolution or annihilation), neither birth nor death. To the emancipated soul the universe or rather multiverse is as unsubstantial as a dream. It is a *jala morgana*, a mirage, an illusion. But from the realistic or empirical standpoint, the starting-point

of experience, the world or *jagat* exists. About its birth and death we can but speculate on the basis of the analogy of the birth and death of all the individual units which constitute the aggregate. For a scientific view we cannot do better than turn to Dr. Jeans, perhaps the greatest living cosmogonist, who has given to the laymen a very clear exposition of the birth and death

of worlds in his little book, *Eos*, belonging to the well-known and very useful *To-day and To-morrow Series*. According to the latest developments of cosmical physics the fundamental physical phenomenon of the whole universe or rather multiverse is radiation. Electrons and protons have but one end—annihilation. To quote the words of Dr. Jeans: "The final state of the universe admits of very exact calculation." The universe, he holds, will ultimately dissolve into radiation. "There would be neither sunlight nor starlight but only a cool glow of radiation uniformly diffused through space. This is, indeed, so far as present-day science can see, the final end towards which all creation moves, and at which it must, at long last, arrive.

'Then star nor sun shall waken,  
Nor any change of light ;  
Nor sound of waters shaken,  
Nor any sound or sight. . . .  
Only the sleep eternal  
In an eternal night.' "

This 'radiation' we may roughly call *मूलप्रकृति* in the language of our philosophy. As for the reverse process, the process of re-creation, re-emana-tion or re-projection, the process of change into the present condition, or in other words, the setting in of another cycle, there is a difference of opinion among the scientists. Though in his *Eos* Dr. Jeans thinks that another cycle will not commence, yet elsewhere he has said that there may be a reverse process. Sir Oliver Lodge inclines to this belief. But what interests us most is that Dr. Jeans concludes his book by making the nearest approach to the Vedantist position, for he suggests towards the end that "the universe may after all be a dream," that it is just possible that the picture of *srishti* and *pralaya* is "a creation of our own mind in which nothing exists except itself."

From the latest conclusions of science let us turn now to the conclusions of our *śāstras*. According to our

ancient sages there are four kinds of *pralaya* निवृत्ति, नैमित्तिक, प्राकृत and अत्यन्तिक.\* Deep slumber or सुषुप्ति is called *nitya pralaya*, for in this state the world ceases to exist for the man who sleeps. *Naimittika pralaya* is the name of the dissolution of the universe at the end of one day's time of कार्यकाल or दिनकाल or व्रत. This has been described in *Manu Samhitā* and the *Purānas*. These two kinds of *pralaya* we may leave out of account, for *nitya pralaya* is subjective and *naimittika pralaya* mythological. The two kinds of *pralaya* that have tremendous significance for the modern mind are *prākṛita pralaya* and *ātyantika pralaya*.

*Prākṛita pralaya* is the *pralaya*, the conception of which is on all fours with modern scientific ideas. *Prākṛita pralaya* means the dissolution of all the worlds into the primordial cause or मूलप्रकृति or माया. According to this conception the worlds do not fade away into परब्रह्म but into *Māyā*. This *pralaya* is recognised by Sankaracharya in the *Brahma Sutra*, 1. 3. 30. This *pralaya* is followed by another *srishti* and so forth and so on. One *kalpa* or cycle is just like another. There is no absolute extinction.

*Atyantika pralaya* is only another name for universal *mukti*. The idea is that *jeevas* are being emancipated one by one till at last a time will come when not a single soul will remain in bondage. When all will be free there will be no rebirth and consequently no new *srishti*. Not that there are not Vedantists who hold to this view. Sankaracharya, however, does not accept it nor does Vachaspati Misra in his *Tattva-vaśīśārādi*. According to these authorities there are successions of cycles without absolute beginning and absolute end and there can never be such a thing as universal *mukti*. *Mukti* is only for the few. The

\*This is taken from Mahamahopadhyaya Pundit Chandrakanta Tarkalankara's *Sree Gopal Basu Mallik Fellowship Lectures on Vedānta*, 1902, Vol. V.

*Naiyāyikas* and the *Sāṅkhyas* share the view. It is only the *Mimāṃsakas* who do not recognise any kind of *pralaya*—*prākṛita* or *ātyantika*. But the *Mimāṃsaka* view is not scientific.

Is universal *mukti* or *ātyantika pralaya* supported by the three *prasthānas*—*Sruti*, *Sutra* and *Smṛiti*? The answer must be in the negative. According to the *Upanishads* a man may be reborn as a lower animal if his *karma* is bad. *Kāthopaniṣad* distinctly says that very few desire *mukti*. Here is the *sloka*: कश्चिद्द्वैतः प्रत्यगन्तानमिच्छदाहन्-चक्षुरस्तत्त्वनिष्ठम् । That being so, there can be no universal *mukti*, for *सुमुच्यते* or desire for *mukti* is its indispensable condition.

As for the second *prasthāna* or *Brahma Sutra*, it distinctly repudiates the idea of *ātyantika pralaya* in 1. 3. 30.

Then when we come to the third *prasthāna* or *Bhagavad-Geetā*, what is it that we see? The same conclusion. The third *sloka* of the seventh chapter runs thus: अनुशासन् स ह्यहं बु कश्चिद् यतति सिद्धये । यततामपि सिद्धानां कश्चिन्मा वेति तत्त्वतः ॥ (One in thousands tries for realisation and one only succeeds among those who try).

Again in the sixteenth chapter of the *Geetā* there is a clear line of demarcation between *दैवी गुण्य* (godly qualities) and *आसुरी गुण्य* (demoniac qualities). In the fifth *sloka* of that chapter Lord Sree Krishna says: दैवी गुण्यद्विधीनां निबन्धा आसुरी मताः । (Godly qualities lead to *moksha* and demoniac qualities lead to bondage).

Then again in the 19th and 20th *slokas* of the same chapter Lord Sree Krishna distinctly says that these wicked people are not only born again and again as wicked but they go lower and lower down in the scale of existence.

Next when we come to Bhagawan Ramakrishna we see that he has divided men into four classes: (1) *नित्य* (born pure); (2) *मुक्त* (those who were not originally pure but who have become pure and emancipated through *sādhana*); (3) *सुमुक्त* (those who desire emancipation but are not yet free); and (4) *बन्ध* (those

who are in bondage and delight in bondage). We also know that he used to say: "Only one man in a hundred thousand finishes his play and smilingly, O Divine Mother, claspest Thou Thy hands."

All the authorities quoted above unmistakably point to the conclusion that there is no *ātyantika pralaya* or universal *mukti* but there is only a cyclical movement or a perpetual round of *srishṭi* and *pralaya*.

When from authority we come to reason it is the same conclusion that we arrive at. Actual observation of human nature, the course of human history, the social, political and economic condition of men from generation to generation in spite of the achievements of science and ingenuity of human contrivance—all lead inevitably to the conclusion that there is no such thing as a steady progress towards universal *mukti* or universal goodness. There is absolutely no possibility of *ātyantika pralaya*. The only possibility is that of *prākṛita pralaya*. THE IMPLICATION OF ATYANTIKA PRALAYA IS MELIORISM AND THAT OF PRAKRITA PRALAYA PESSIMISM. But as I have shown the unreasonableness of meliorism elsewhere, so I do not propose to go over the ground again.

Some will say after reading all this that it is a very gloomy view of life. My answer is: Gloomy for whom? Certainly not for those who love the world and want it to continue. But is it gloomy for those who desire emancipation? The answer is: No; for some of those who desire freedom will become free and as for those who do not attain it, their desire notwithstanding, they will try again. If they do not succeed in one life they will have other lives to try. न हि कश्चाप्यज्ञात् कश्चिद् गतिं दातुं शक्नोति । (The doer of good never comes to grief). स्वल्पकृत्यस्य धर्मस्य नायनं महती भयात् । (Even the least of this *dharma* saves from great fear).

You may also say: The theory of rebirth is a hypothesis; it may be a very good hypothesis—much better than that of Eternal Heaven and Eternal Hell—but still I believe it is a hypothesis; and, even if it be granted that there is rebirth, practically there is a break in my personal continuity. At least I shall not know that it is the same “I” that is reaping the consequence. Memory may not be the criterion of personality but to all intents and purposes this “I” will be another person. Even in this life there are cases of “double personality,” strange cases of Jekyll and Hyde. The answer to all this will be: It is true that the doctrine of rebirth cannot supply a motive for any selfish purpose to a critically-minded man; but to a man who has a heart and who has developed a strong moral sense the good consequence of his act enjoyed by practically another person will be a thing of joy; and the evil consequence of his act suffered by practically another person will be something very sad to contemplate. “*Mukti being a state of perfect selflessness can never be reached by selfishness.*” चात्मानो मोक्षार्थं or one’s own emancipation means self-effacement. *Mukti* for *mukti*’s sake. Perfection for the sake of perfection. Good for its own sake. It is the *summum bonum* of life—निःश्रेयस्—after gaining which there is nothing more to be gained—यं यश्चा चापरं लाभं मन्यते नाधिकं ततः। This *moksha* is identical with Brahman. नित्यसुखमज्ञानरूपं त्वामोक्षस्य\*। It is the same as Lord Buddha’s *Nirvāna*. No You; No I; No World—न त्वं नाहं नायं लोकाः। सीद्मन् is the same as नाहम्. I do not see the least difference between Sankara and Buddha. It is not Sankara who is a crypto-Buddhist (प्रच्छन्न बौद्ध) but it is Buddha who is a true Vedantist. The true doctrine of Buddha differs from that of his followers. It is these followers whom Sankara combated. Amar Sing, the Buddhist lexicographer, has called Buddha an *adwaya-vādi* in

his dictionary. That was also the view of Swami Vivekananda. Only Vivekananda has called him a ‘rebel child’ because he disowned the *Sruti*; but perhaps in his time he had very good reasons for doing so. And does not Sankara himself say that even *moksha śāstra* is *māyā*?

I have digressed a little. Let me resume my answer to those who are sceptical about the doctrine of rebirth. After all that has been said let me add only this: If you do not believe in rebirth you ought to be contented with what you have achieved, for you have done your best and it is the positive achievement, however little, that matters—and if you have not been able to realise fully, others have. That ought to be consolation enough. A truly ethical man, a follower of Vedānta, ought not to distinguish between himself and another. This is the *pāramārthica standpoint*. *Bheda* is *kālpānica*.

Some will again object: Your doctrine of emancipation for the few is very much like the Calvinistic doctrine of predestination. My answer is: Nothing of the kind, for predestination implies a despotic God or a despotic Fate who imposes his will and robs us of our freedom; but the law of *karma* implies free will. If you do not exercise your free will, if you do not hear the voice of *Dharma*, the voice of Ought, then whose fault is it? Yours or somebody else’s? You cannot even blame God or Fate as a believer in predestination might. You alone are the architect of your future. As Bhagawan Ramakrishna has said: “God’s breeze of grace is always blowing. Why don’t you spread your sail?” If we do not “spread our sail,” then whose fault is it? Ours or God’s?

Another possible objection would be like this: The doctrine that *mukti* is for the few is sure to paralyse our energy. The answer would be: Nothing of the kind, for nobody knows who the few are. You may be one of the few. Yet it is not like lottery, for you have

\*For this view see *Bṛhaddāraṇyaka Upaniṣhad*. 4. 4. 8.



control over your actions but no control over a lottery. 'Our *śāstras* persistently urge perseverance and zeal and blame idleness and laziness.' According to the *Bhagavad-Geetā* you cannot stop from working, however hard you may try—and '*meditating deeply is the hardest of works.*'

If you say again: What is the good of working, seeing that there cannot be permanent improvement of the world? then the answer will be: You have wholly misunderstood the philosophy of work. True work is *niskāma*. There is no difference between such work and *naiskarmya*. Activism and Quietism coincide here. "To work alone you have the right—not to the fruits thereof." You must *renounce* the fruits of your work. The outward result may elate you or disappoint you. Both states of mind are obstacles to spiritual progress. You should be calm and

serene and work primarily for your own emancipation from the bondage of the flesh—there is no selfishness here—*ब्रह्मणे भोक्तृ*, though others are also benefited. True, prophets are sometimes stoned and killed, but it is also true that there ARE people who wait for the message and example—and these are the salt of the earth. And even if nobody cares, it does not matter, for "*religion is not primarily a social or political fact; it is primarily what a man does with himself in solitude.*" If nobody accompanies or follows you, you will march forward alone. Alone you came and alone you will go.

These are the lessons derived from what we believe to be the true conception of *pralaya*. *Ātmanika pralaya* is unscientific, unhistorical and unsupported by the *śāstras*, whereas *frākrita pralaya* is scientific, historical and scriptural.

## A SERAPHIC SOUL

BY SWAMI NITYASWARUPANANDA

Little is known outside Bengal of Swami Premananda who was one of the foremost disciples of Sri Ramakrishna and one of those rare souls who appear among mankind for its elevation and consecration. His name was Premananda—"Bliss in Love"—and he was indeed Love incarnate, seeming to drip love in his every action, thought and feeling. We inscribe the following lines to his sweet and hallowed memory.

### I

Antpur is a noted small village in the district of Hooghly. As is the case with the villages of Bengal, Antpur commands a beautiful natural scenery, having vast green fields all around and large and small ponds beautified with blooming lotuses. The Ghoses and the Mitras were the most respectable and influential *Kāyastha*

families in the village. Of the former came Taraprasad Ghose, and of the latter, Srimati Matangini. They were married and formed a very pious and religious couple. Of them was born first a daughter who was called Krishnabhavini and then three sons—Tulsiram, Baburam and Santiram. Krishnabhavini who was endowed with extraordinary virtues, was married to Balaram Bose who became one of the most beloved and foremost householder disciples of Sri Ramakrishna, and Baburam became Swami Premananda.

Balaram Bose owned a large estate. But being very much religiously minded, he could not look after it and spent most of his time in worship, meditation and the study of the scriptures. It is said that at his first meeting with him, Sri Ramakrishna knew him to be one of his inner circle of disciples. After this meeting,

Balaram used frequently to visit Sri Ramakrishna. Often he took in his company his wife and children. Through his eagerness to share his joy in Sri Ramakrishna's company with his friends and relations, he brought about the meeting of his mother-in-law also with him. His devoted mother-in-law, mother of Baburam, was highly pleased and thought herself blessed by seeing him.

About this time Baburam finished his elementary education in his village school and came to Calcutta for further study. He entered a High English School of which M., the celebrated author of *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, happened to be the headmaster. M. used to visit the Master frequently at the time. Rakhal (Swami Brahma-nanda) also read in the same school with Baburam. Strangely enough, between these two boys who were destined to be bound in intimate ties in later years, there grew a very friendly and cordial relation even in their first meeting, and with the passing of days this relationship became only more and more intimate.

Baburam happened to see Sri Ramakrishna for the first time in a *Hari Sabhâ* at Jorasanko, Calcutta, where the latter had gone to hear the reading of the *Bhâgavatam*. But he then did not know that it was Sri Ramakrishna. He also heard from his elder brother about the Master who, he was told, lost all consciousness of the world like Sri Gouranga, while uttering the name of God. On being asked if he would like to see him, he agreed. Accordingly the next day he settled with Rakhal who he knew used to visit Dakshineswar, that on the following Saturday they would go together to see Sri Ramakrishna. On the appointed day, after the school hours, they set out in a boat and were joined on the way by a friend named Ramdayal Chakravarty, who also used to visit Sri Ramakrishna. Rakhal inquired of his friend if he would like to stay there for the night. Baburam thought

that they were going to a monk who must be living in a hut. So he asked, "Will there be accommodation for us?" Rakhal only said, "There may be." Then the question of food troubled him and he said, "What shall we eat at night? There are shops there, I hope?" Rakhal simply said, "We shall manage somehow."

At sunset they reached the temple of Dakshineswar. Baburam was fascinated with the beauty of the place. It looked like a fairy land. They entered the room of Sri Ramakrishna but found that he was not there. Rakhal said to them, "He has gone to the Kâli temple. Please wait here a little and I shall call him." He hurried to the temple and in a few minutes was seen conducting Sri Ramakrishna holding him by the hand. Sri Ramakrishna was in a state of God-intoxication, and his feet were unsteady. So Rakhal was carefully directing his footsteps telling him about the high and low places. Reaching his own room he sat on the small bedstead, and presently regained his normal consciousness. Then he inquired about the new-comer. Ramdayal introduced him. Then Sri Ramakrishna said, "Ah, you are a relative of Balaram! Then you are related to us also. Well, what is your native place?"

Baburam: Antpur, Sir.

Sri R.: Ah! Then I must have visited it. Kali and Bhulu of Jhamapukur hail from that place, don't they?

Baburam: Yes, Sir. But how do you know them?

Sri R.: Why, they are sons of Ramprasad Mitra. When I was at Jhamapukur, I used frequently to go to their house as well as that of Digambar Mitra.

Saying this Sri Ramakrishna caught hold of Baburam's hand and said, "Come closer to the light. Let me see your face." In the dim light of an earthen lamp he carefully studied the

face. He was satisfied with the results of the examination and often nodded his head in approbation. Then he proceeded to examine the boy's limbs. Finally he said, "Let me see your palm." He looked at it and then placed it upon his own so as to weigh it. At the end of it he was pleased to remark, "All right, all right." Then turning to Ramdayal he said, "Do you know how Naren is doing? I heard that he was a bit indisposed."

Ramdayal: I have heard that he is doing well.

Sri R.: He has not come here for a long time, and I feel a great longing to see him. Will you ask him to come here one day? You won't forget it?

Ramdayal: I shall ask him positively.

It was about 10 o'clock. Ramdayal had brought a large quantity of food for Sri Ramakrishna, only a part of which the latter took, the rest being distributed among the three devotees. Then Sri Ramakrishna asked them where they preferred to sleep—in his room or outside. Rakhal chose inside, but Baburam thought that his presence might disturb the meditation of the saint, so he and Ramdayal preferred to sleep outside, though Sri Ramakrishna again and again invited them to sleep inside. It was the month of April, 1882. The two devotees had hardly fallen asleep when they were roused by the cry of guards. Presently Sri Ramakrishna approached them reeling like a drunkard with his cloth under his arm. Addressing Ramdayal he said, "Hallo, are you asleep?" "No, Sir," was the reply. Then Sri Ramakrishna said with great eagerness, "Please tell him to come. I feel as if somebody is wringing my heart like this,"—and he twisted his cloth. Every word and gesture of his expressed the unspeakable agony of his heart at the separation from Narendranath. Ramdayal assured him emphatically. Then Sri Ramakrishna again stated his case, and the other again comforted him. "What a love!"

Baburam thought within himself. "He is so restless! But how queer must be the man for whom he is pining! He does not respond to his wishes!" Sri Ramakrishna proceeded a few steps towards his room. Then he again returned and said to Ramdayal, "Then don't forget to tell him about it." He repeated these words and again went back to his bed with staggering steps. About an hour after, he again appeared in the same fashion and unburdened his mind to Ramdayal. "Look here, he is very pure. I look upon him as the manifestation of Narayana, and can't live without him. His absence is wringing my heart like this," and he again twisted his cloth. Then he said in bitter anguish, "I am being put to the rack, as it were, for his sake. Let him come here just once!" This scene was repeated throughout the night at intervals of an hour.

When Baburam met Sri Ramakrishna the next morning he found him quite a different man. There was no trace of anxiety on his face. He asked Baburam to go round the Panchavati.

He was about twenty years of age but looked much younger, and was very handsome. In his childhood if any one out of fun told him that he would get a bride, he would lisp out, "Oh, I shall die then." When he was eight years old he used to think how nice it would be if he had a good monastic companion with whom he could lead a life of renunciation in a hut shut out from public view by a thick wall of trees. The vision would conjure up an enchanting picture like this. Reaching the Panchavati he was surprised to find how this place tallied exactly with his boyish dreams. How could he have foreshadowed the picture so accurately? He, however, kept the idea to himself and returned to Sri Ramakrishna. Being questioned how he liked the place, he only said it was nice. Sri Ramakrishna then asked him to visit the Kali temple, which he did. When he took his leave of Sri Ramakrishna, the latter

affectionately asked him to come again. He agreed and left for Calcutta, while Rakhal remained at Dakshineswar.

Baburam was greatly impressed. "He is an exceptionally good man," he thought, "and dearly loves Naren. But strange that the latter does not go to him." The next Sunday at 8 o'clock he again came to Dakshineswar. A few devotees were seated before Sri Ramakrishna. He welcomed Baburam and said, "It is nice that you have come. Go to the Panchavati where they are having a picnic. And Naren has come. Have a talk with him." Coming to the Panchavati Baburam found Rakhal who introduced him to Narendra and some other young devotees of Sri Ramakrishna, who had assembled there. At the very first sight Baburam was full of admiration for Narendra. Such glorious eyes and a handsome face lit up with smiles every now and then! To look at him was to love him. Narendra was leading the functions of the day and talking with his friends. Presently he burst into a song which charmed Baburam. With bated breath he heard the song as he involuntarily said to himself, "Ah, what versatile gifts he has!"\*

Baburam began to mix more closely with Sri Ramakrishna who grew to be dearer and dearer to him as days went on. He began to perceive that his relation with Sri Ramakrishna was not of this life only but one from a far more remote existence. Sri Ramakrishna also looked upon him as his own. With the passing of days Baburam found in him his highest ideal and offered him his heart and soul and surrendered himself at his feet for ever. Sri Ramakrishna took this young soul under his care and like an ever-watchful mother began to train him in a thousand ways, so that he might be blessed with the knowledge of the

Divinity within him. He had a very high opinion of Baburam. He knew him to be absolutely pure and classed him among the *Nitya Siddhas* and *Iswarakotis*. A vision gave Sri Ramakrishna an inkling into the personality of the disciple, in which he saw Baburam as a goddess with a necklace on, accompanied by a lady friend.

The inner group of disciples had begun to come to Sri Ramakrishna from 1881. From that time forward they took all personal care of the Master. Latu and Rakhal attended on him for a long time. Latu served the Master throughout, but Rakhal had to be away at times. We have said above that Baburam's purity was absolute. "It is a new vessel and milk can be put into it without fear of turning,"—this is what Sri Ramakrishna used to say of him. He also often said, "Baburam is pure to his very marrow. No impure thought can ever cross his mind and body." That is why Sri Ramakrishna looked upon him as a fit attendant and liked to always have him by. At a certain period Sri Ramakrishna felt some difficulty with regard to his personal care, for Rakhal had not been with him for some time. There were others no doubt, but they could not touch the Master in all his moods. So Sri Ramakrishna said to Baburam, "In this my condition I cannot bear the touch of all. You stop here,—then it will be very good." But Baburam could not stay with the Master permanently at that time;—he was afraid there might be trouble from his people. Nevertheless he began staying there by and by. Days went on, and through closer associations with the Master, Baburam's mind began to incline more towards God than study, though he could not give up his study altogether. One day Sri Ramakrishna asked Baburam, "Where are your books? Do you not mean to continue your studies?" And then he said to M. who was there, "He wants to maintain both sides." And he added: "Very difficult is the path.

\*We have taken from the *Life of Sri Ramakrishna* the above account of the Swami's meetings with Sri Ramakrishna.

What will a little knowledge avail? Just imagine Vashistha being seized with grief at the loss of his son! Lakshmana was amazed to see it and asked Rama. Rama said, 'Brother, there is nothing to wonder at it. Whoever has knowledge, has also ignorance. May you go beyond both knowledge and ignorance.' "

Baburam smilingly replied: "I want just that."

Sri R.: "Well, is it possible to have that if you stick to both sides? If you want that, then come away."

Baburam: (*smiling*) "You draw me out."

Sri Ramakrishna perceived that there might be trouble if he allowed Baburam to stay with him permanently. So he passed by the topic saying, "You are weak-minded. You lack boldness. Just see how junior Naren says,—'I shall stay here and shall never go back.' " But whatever he might say to Baburam, he was at heart very eager to have him by and to fashion him after his own ideal. And then came an opportunity. One day Baburam's mother came to visit Sri Ramakrishna. He availed himself of this occasion and said to her, "Please give your son to me." His mother was a great devotee and loved and revered Sri Ramakrishna from the bottom of her heart. So even this rather unusual request of Sri Ramakrishna did not make her sorry. She was rather pleased and unhesitatingly replied, "Oh, it is a great blessing to me that Baburam should stay with you." After this there was no more any fear, and Baburam's association with the Master became more constant. Baburam cheerfully stopped at Dakshineswar and served the Master. What a deep love the Master had for Baburam! "*Daradi*" (the companion of one's soul), this most endearing term the Master used to apply to him.

In later years if it was ever said to Baburam Maharaj that he loved us dearly, he would thus refer to the Master's love for him: "Have I

really loved you? No. If I had, I would have bound you for ever to me. Oh, how deeply the Master loved us! We do not bear even one-hundredth of that love towards you. When I would fall asleep while fanning him at night, he would take me inside his mosquito net and make me sleep on his bed. When I would remonstrate with him saying that it would be sacrilegious for me to use his bed, he would say, 'Outside mosquitos will bite you. I shall wake you up when necessary.' " The Master loved Baburam so dearly that he often came to visit him at Calcutta and fed him with the sweets which he had brought from Dakshineswar. And we have it from Baburam Maharaj himself that the intensity of the Master's affection for him often made the Master cry when Baburam came away from him to Calcutta. The Master thus treated him like an ever loving mother and made him his own and bound him for ever to himself.

Once Baburam was very sad that he could not get the experience of *Bhāva* (spiritual ecstasy) which the others had while hearing devotional songs and the recitation of the Lord's name. So he pressed Sri Ramakrishna to grant him that experience. The Master prayed to the Divine Mother for his sake, but got the reply that he would have *Jñāna* (Knowledge) and not *Bhāva*. This consoled the Master, as it would give the boy some sort of realisation and thereby strengthen his faith in his teacher, which was essential for a religious life.

Association with the Master left an indelible impression on the mind of Baburam. Many are the reminiscences that he often recounted in his later years to the young monks and devotees in order to make his own words impressive. One day he was sleeping in Sri Ramakrishna's room. Suddenly he was roused by the sound of the Master's footsteps. He opened his eyes and what he saw impressed him

deeply. Sri Ramakrishna was pacing fast round the room in a state of trance with his cloth under his arm. He was saying, "Away with it! Away with it!" with a deep feeling of abhorrence and prayed, "Mother, don't give me name and fame, don't give me name and fame, Mother." It seemed to the boy that the Divine Mother was as it were following him with a basket full of name and fame to present it to him and that the Master was remonstrating with Her. Baburam Maharaj used to say that that day the Master created in him the uttermost hatred towards name and fame which were the most dreadful enemies to God-realisation.

One day Hazra,\* in his characteristic way, was advising Baburam and some other young boys to ask of Sri Ramakrishna something tangible in the shape of powers instead of, as was their wont, merely living a jolly life with him with plenty of good things to eat. Sri Ramakrishna who was by, scented this mischief-making of Hazra and at once called Baburam to his side and spiritedly said: "Well, what can you ask? Isn't everything that I have yours already? Yes, everything I have earned in the shape of realisations, is for the sake of you all. So get rid of the idea of begging, which alienates by creating distance. Rather realise your kinship to me and have the key to all that treasure."

In a thousand ways like this, the Master's watchful loving care and guidance trained the young souls and developed their true individuality without a speck of selfishness in them. Oh, how happily the young disciples lived in the company of Sri Ramakrishna! But not for long could they enjoy it. In 1886 Sri Ramakrishna passed away leaving behind with the young disciples a divine trust to be fulfilled by them in later years.

\*Pratap Ch. Hazra who used to live at Dakshineswar at that time.

## II

While Sri Ramakrishna was living at Cossipur undergoing treatment, all the young disciples assembled to his side to serve him and thus formed themselves into a group. It was here that those young souls were linked with one another in the most intimate ties of love and affection, and it may be said that the Master himself thus created the nucleus of the organisation that was destined to propagate his message and thereby bring the water of life to millions of thirsting souls in all future years. But just after the passing of Sri Ramakrishna in August, 1886, the young disciples were separated from one another and returned to their duties at home. Nevertheless, the fire of renunciation and love for God, that had been once kindled in their hearts by the Master, could not be quenched. In a few months their leader, Narendranath, brought all of them together at the Baranagore monastery,—a dilapidated house rented by Surendra Nath Mitra, one of the householder disciples of Sri Ramakrishna. In the Christmas of 1886, he took them all to Antpur, the ancestral house of Baburam. They spent there more than a week in extreme joy practising intense meditation and *Sādhana*. It was here that their enthusiasm for renunciation reached its acme, which definitely sealed the bond of fellowship among them and raked up the dormant spirit of renunciation in those that had lagged behind. Shortly after their return, the Baranagore monastery had its full complement of monks, all pledged to a life of the highest asceticism. At this Baranagore Math Narendranath performed an elaborate *Virajā Homa* and took formal initiation into *Sannyāsa* along with his brother-disciples. Narendranath gave the name Premananda to Baburam as he thought that it conformed to the remark of Sri Ramakrishna that Sri Radha, the

Goddess of Love, herself was partially incarnated in him.

At Baranagore they spent almost six years. Swami Ramakrishnananda was then occupying himself with the daily worship of the Master. But when he was sent to Madras to spread the Gospel of the Master there, Swami Premananda cheerfully took up the worship of the Master and performed it till he went out on a pilgrimage, from which he returned a little before the removal of the monastery to Belur. After his return, he resumed the worship of the Master. And when Swami Vivekananda founded the Belur Math after his triumphal return from America, he began to live there with him. Swamiji made a rule that none should sleep by day in the Math. One day one of the disciples of Swamiji brought him word that Baburam Maharaj was sleeping. Swamiji said to him, "Just go and drag him from off his bed by the feet." The disciple bowed to his order and did exactly as he was told. Baburam Maharaj awoke and seeing the boy thus dragging him said, "Stop, stop. What are you about?" But the boy did not stop; he dragged him to the ground and fled away. Baburam Maharaj understood the whole thing. In the evening after finishing the evening worship of the Master, Baburam Maharaj came to the verandah in front of Swamiji's room. Swamiji was then pacing there. As soon as he saw him, Swamiji clasped his feet and said with his voice choked with emotion and tears running down his cheeks: "Brother, what loving care the Master used to take of you! He always kept you in his bosom. And I—how wrongly do I not torture you! Is it for this that the Master gave your charge to me?" So saying Swamiji began to cry aloud like a boy. And it was with great difficulty that Swami Premananda could console him that day. Thus it was that the sons of Sri Ramakrishna were bound in the ties of purest love and reverence with each other.

### III

After the passing of Swami Vivekananda the work of looking after the Math and the Mission fell on Swami Brahmananda. For this he had to travel in different parts of India and Baburam Maharaj looked after the management of the Belur Math. The worship of the Master, the training of young *Brahmachārins* and *Sannyāsins*, receiving visitors and giving instructions to them—all these Baburam Maharaj did with the greatest love and satisfaction. Love was his very being and the *raison d'être* of his great influence over all. The monks as well as those who visited the Math were so much moved and attracted by his love, that they all agreed that Swami Premananda was the mother of the Math and that nowhere did they get such love and care. His unique love knew no bounds. He gave refuge to those who were shunned by others and sowed the seeds of religion in those that were ostracised by society. A young man of a respectable family of Calcutta, unable to restrain himself in the prime of youth, went a long way towards the path of evil. Fortunately he happened to see Swami Premananda one day, and felt attracted towards him. He visited the Swami several times. Baburam Maharaj came to know the minute details of his character. But he offered him the deepest love of his heart. "How strange!" the youth thought within himself. "How could he so love me who have been given up even by my relatives as being unworthy of their name?—He is fully aware of all my misdeeds and has no connection with me! Others love with selfish motives, but he does not expect anything from me." Thus his attraction for the Swami increased infinitely and purified his heart and at last brought about a revolutionary change in his whole being. An intense spirit of renunciation gradually grew within him. He gave up the world and embraced the

life of *Sannyāsa*. To-day he is spending himself in devoted service to suffering humanity.

Thus the Swami moulded many a life. He knew perfectly well how to tackle a person and help him forward to a noble end and finally to God-realisation. We have witnessed many cases in which through his ennobling influence rogues and drunkards gave up their evil habits and led pure lives in their later days.

After the establishment of the Belur Math the number of devotees gradually began to increase. It could not be otherwise. For Baburam Maharaj was a magnet and it was his nature to attract. Whoever visited him once, could not but be attracted to him. He made the devotees his own by his love. In his time the devotees came to the Math in great numbers every day. He entertained them very sweetly and none could go back without being entertained. The midday meal could not therefore be finished till 1-30 or 2 p.m. And it often so happened that a group of devotees arrived at the Math from a distant place after the meal had been over. The *Sādhus* perhaps were then taking rest. They were tired and Baburam Maharaj did not like to ask them to cook for them. So he silently proceeded to the kitchen to prepare food for them himself. But the young *Sādhus* ran to him and gladly did the needful and entertained the new-comers. This happened not once or twice but for days and days together. He became highly pleased with those who came forward to entertain the devotees at such odd times. He encouraged them in these selfless deeds of service saying: "Well, the householders have to do a lot of things. Is it possible for them to come always at proper times? And what can we do to them? We can only serve them, and that costs us nothing but a little physical trouble. Through the Master's grace nothing is wanting here. Should we not be blessed by giving these things to his children?"

Everybody that came to the Math was regarded by him as having some worth. He used to say: "How many are the places for the people to seek pleasure in! Some go to visit garden houses and others maybe to attend amusements. But nevertheless whoever comes here, it must be understood, has some worth in him. Or why should he come here?"

#### IV

The Swami's entertainment did not finish with physical service only. He was also eager to supply them with spiritual food. And this trait of character was only too prominent in him. Whenever he got an opportunity, he talked with them on spiritual matters and tried to infuse into them the spirit of devotion to God. His words had a magical influence and easily made their way into the hearts of the hearers. Just after a little rest after the midday meal, he used to talk with the new-comers and again after the evening service with those that happened to stop at the Math for the night. One evening he said: "What would it have availed if I had married? I might have two or three children of whom perhaps one might be a devotee and the others rogues. Just imagine what a trouble it would have been! But now, see how I love all devotees like my children! In the former case I would have been attached to one or two, but now I can love the people of the whole country. I once noticed that a man had great hatred for his nephew but much love for his own son. I was very much annoyed at this. But as I was a *Sādhu*, I did not say anything. These are the narrownesses of the householders. 'Mine', 'mine'—this is what is always on their lips. 'My house, my room, my son!' But there is no knowing where one will go after one has closed one's eyes. If the householders can make their professions conform to their practice, and practise 'Thou' and 'Thine' instead of 'my' and 'mine', they can



be unattached and perfect. 'Lord, Thine is the house, Thine is the room, Thine are the children, even this body is 'Thine, Thine is everything, O Lord!' 'Not I, not I, not I—Thou, Thou, Thou!' 'I am a servant, a servant, a servant of Thee.' The Master used to say, 'All trouble will vanish when the "I" will die.' This ego is the root of all evil. This roguish ego will have to be destroyed and put an end to. On the other hand, this ego-serpent is being nourished with milk and plantain. It is, therefore, that we are restless with pain from its bite; and yet we hug it to our bosom! We are pained to forego it! Such is ignorance! The *Gītā* says: 'Whatever thou doest, whatever thou

eatest, whatever thou offerest in sacrifice, whatever thou givest away, whatever austerity thou practisest, O son of Kunti, do that as an offering unto Me.' This spirit must be developed, only then can you be released from the bondage of the world. 'I offer Thee my all and with one-pointed devotion do I for ever become a servant to Thee.'—This spirit of self-surrender must be cultivated within." Pin-drop silence reigned while these words fell from the lips of the Swami, and an exaltation filled the minds of the *Sādhus* and the devotees who were listening to him. Thus whenever the devotees came to the Math, they often realised a certain degree of spiritual upliftment.

(To be concluded)

## THE WEST'S DEFENCE

BY G. K. CHESTERTON

I suffer from only one slight hesitation or weakness in retorting controversially upon Mr. Metta's criticism of Western progress; and that incidental disadvantage is that I entirely agree with about three quarters of what he says. But the quarter with which I do not agree happens to be rather important and something more than a mere section of the whole. Of course one does not need to be an Oriental to see the simple fact that change is not progress. This perception only requires that one be not a raving lunatic. Softening of the brain is change; but even those earnest progressives who most conspicuously suffer from it have never been quite so soft as to identify it definitely with progress. Taking poison and writhing in agonies is change; but few would describe it as progress, though some of the more serious might describe it as effort or physical exercise. But of course Mr. Metta both means and maintains something more than is implied in this obvious distinction.

He means and maintains two things,

at least, with which I should substantially agree. First, that the presumption of progress, in the sense of taking it for granted that the fifteenth century is better than the fourteenth, is a piece of muddle-headed and thoroughly bad philosophy. And, second, that the pre-occupation with progress, in modern times, has in fact led to a vast amount of senseless and aimless change which amounts to little more than a perpetual appeal to snobs to follow the fashion and to trade to follow the latest stunt. I repeat that in this I entirely agree with him.

But, to begin with, he seems to have forgotten one fact not unimportant for a general criticism of the West. In this I say I should agree with him; but so would Plato agree with him and Dante agree with him and Shakespeare agree with him and Montaigne and Swift agree with him, and probably even Rousseau and Wordsworth agree with him. Even the two active Europeans whom he holds up as terrible examples of Occidental restlessness would probably agree with him.

Alexander the Great presumably enjoyed change, in the sense of travel; he enjoyed adventure and danger, as many healthy men have done. But if it be suggested that he quite seriously believed that the civilization of his Macedonian Empire must of necessity be superior to the culture of Athens in the high moment of Pericles, I very gravely doubt it. At least if Alexander thought so, he must have forgotten all he learned from his great tutor, Aristotle, who laid down in bold and defiant terms the imperishable and unpopular truth that a state can hardly be too small and can very easily be too large.

#### JULIUS CÆSAR, REFORMER

Julius Cæsar was doubtless in some aspects simply a jolly fellow on the make; in some other aspects, a man putting many things right that had really gone wrong. There is no doubt that Cæsar believed in *reforms*; and especially in the general reform of smashing up the (by that time) hollow and pompous and hypocritical oligarchy that was called the Republic. He was not the last Italian in history to feel that sort of impatience with the sacred institution of a parliament.

But if we ask whether Cæsar believed in progress, as a thing quite distinct from reform, in the general theory that things improve in process of time, I should again be most profoundly skeptical. The very evil against which Cæsar fought was one of the hundred examples of the fact that things do not grow better, but grow worse; and that even republics do not remain reasonably republican. If we could examine the mind of Cæsar on the matter, I strongly suspect that we might have found him murmuring words not altogether dissimilar from those which were set to verse by the friend of his favourite and successor:

*Damnosa quid non imminuet dies  
Ætas parentum pejor avis tulit  
Nos nequiores mox daturos  
Progeniem vitiosiore.*

But anyhow, there is no evidence that a man believed in all the modern nonsense about progress merely because he found it exciting to fight with the Gauls or amusing to deliver political speeches.

In short, the first criticism of Mr. Metta's thesis which I should be inclined to offer is that, in criticizing the worship of progress in the West, he greatly exaggerates the extent to which the West *did* worship progress. The worship of it, or at least the exaggerated worship of it, is not so much a character of Europe as compared with Asia, as a character of the last few years as compared with all the other centuries everywhere. I admit that there has always been a difference between the spirit of change in the West and of changelessness in the East; but I do not think it is due merely to the very recent, the very crude, and the very priggish theory of progress.

#### WHAT IS PROGRESS

There is no great difficulty about stating the reasonable theory of progress. It might, I think, be stated thus: whatever be the ultimate merits of East and West, there is in the West a certain type of vivacity and vivid concentration which makes it tolerably certain that any particular good it is pursuing for the moment will be in a considerable measure increased. Granted that the building of Roman roads, or the codification of Roman law, or the application of Greek logic to Roman theology, or the organization of armies, or the framing of constitutions, is in some degree a thing worth doing, that thing will be done. For a long time it will be done more and more successfully, until it suddenly occurs to somebody that something totally different is more worth doing. And that, in its turn, so long as it is thought worth doing, will be done more and more successfully.

In this sense the Western world is certainly progressing now. It is pro-

gressing in practical or applied science, for instance; especially in the matter of communications. So long as it is regarded as supremely thrilling that the voice of Lord Tallboys should come through from the North Pole, the West really will work wonders in reaching the Pole and establishing the communication. When it is suddenly realized that the voice of Lord Tallboys is just as much of a bore when it comes from the North Pole as it is when it comes from the next room, the West will transfer its wonderful energies to something else.

But by this concentration of energy certain real reforms are achieved at certain periods. It is probable, for instance, that the philanthropic capitalism of men like Mr. Ford will, in the long run, prevail over the mere sweating and swindling of the hireling; though, there again, there is no saying what may happen if a revulsion takes place under some calamity or drastic change of creed. On the whole, if we ask how many of the workers are employed, or how many of the employed are decently paid, we may find that during a certain period there has been a certain progress. If we alter the question, for instance, and ask how many independent men there are who do not need to be employed and who would be insulted by being paid, we shall find there has been no progress but a huge slump or reaction. The sense of honor, as it exists in the true small proprietor, does not exist in the most model modern employment. In short, it all depends on what the test is; but the truth remains that when the West has established its test, it does put forth prodigious activity and acuteness in order to pass that test. But this characteristic, which dates from before Alexander and Aristotle, is much older and deeper than the little fashionable fad called progress. It would be better expressed by the word *adventure*.

Now I anticipate, with a sad smile, that what I say will be called a paradox; but what I say is this. I am well

aware that much is absurdly called progress when it is merely change. But I rather think I am in favor of change even when it is not progress. A doctor attending a man in Chelsea tells him to go to Margate "for a change." He does not mean that Margate is an ideal city, or that it is better and more beautiful than other places; not even the wildest doctor could believe this. He does not regard the pilgrimage to Margate as a progress—even a pilgrim's progress. But he does regard going to Margate as an adventure, and perhaps the nearest the man can get to piracy on the high seas. On the whole, there is much more to be said for the riverside town where Carlyle and Whistler watched the mists upon the river, than for some seaside town where innumerable Hebrew stockbrokers watch the seaside Pierrots without ever looking at the sea.

But it does not follow that there is not a healthy change in the smell of the sea after the smell of the river. And this sort of change, which the ancient Christian tradition calls a holiday, is quite a different idea from that of perpetually marching along a road to better and better places, and never wanting to come back. The paganism of antiquity understood it when it established the Saturnalia. The Catholicism of the Middle Ages understood it when it said through the mouth of its great theologian, St. Thomas Aquinas, that man must have jokes and sports, since neither the most spiritual contemplation nor the most sociable utility can be continued unrelieved. And the long history of freaks, of breaking out of the frame of society, of humors and adventures in the ends of the earth—that does seem to me a real Western characteristic much more worthy than the little progressive pretensions that are only about eighty years old. To see another aspect, to see a new aspect, of any particular thing is a benefit—always granted certain elementary conditions, of which something may be said in a

moment. It is enough to say here that there are some strange skeptics who, because they have seen a hundred facets of the same diamond, come to the extraordinary conclusion that there is no diamond at all. Yet even those exponents of extravagant negation are, I should suspect, at least as common in the East as in the West.

There is one point which Mr. Metta makes which I think is particularly pointed; and upon that I am particularly in agreement with him. It is when he claims that much of modern democracy, or rather, what is called democracy in the West, has heavily sinned against the ideal of liberty. It has interfered with the citizen in things in which many Oriental despots, and indeed, all sorts of despots, have in practice left him free. I can quite believe that these intimate interferences were often absent from old Asiatic autocracies; so they were from old European autocracies. If you make a list of the ordinary things that an ordinary poor peasant has actually wanted to do, you will find that modern philanthropists are much more oppressive than Ivan the Terrible or Torquemada. The ordinary man with a spade or a hayrake did not desire passionately to write a pamphlet against the Constitution. He was seldom troubled with dreams of building a brick chapel in which to preach some new fine shade about the definition of the Trinity. Consequently, he could not generally be burned as a heretic or hanged as a traitor. But he can be fined, or put in prison, or sometimes even shot by the police, for drinking the ordinary hay-maker's mug of ale, or in some places for letting his children help him in hay-making; or in other places (by a supremely ridiculous recent law) for not wanting the voting-paper which was granted to him because he was supposed to want it.

I am quite as conscious as Mr. Metta of the comic incongruity and injustice of these modern modes of tyranny. But there is something to

be said on the other side, considered as a comparative criticism of the East and West. And I think it is true to say that where and when such tyranny did exist in Eastern custom, it was much less easy to alter it or even to criticize it. Mr. Metta will not confuse me with the vulgar scoffer at the great civilizations of Asia if I say that some religious and moral customs that were really bad have been rooted in Oriental antiquity and repeated through countless Oriental generations.

I have heard it said (I know not if it is true) that the long continued custom of burning Hindu widows was actually founded on a verbal error in the reading of the sacred books. This is one of the few cases in which I think that the Higher Criticism might possibly be of some use. And I think that the Higher Critic would have had a better and an earlier chance in Europe. It was not, perhaps, half so silly in a Chinese woman to squeeze her feet as in an European woman to squeeze her waist. But hundreds of Europeans made fun of the European woman's waist, even while it was the fashion, and probably in consequence it soon ceased to be the fashion. It may fairly be doubted whether in old China, if left to itself, it would ever have ceased to be the tradition.

I have a very real respect for the dignified side of all such traditions; and for the way in which the true pagans of Asia, like the great pagans of antiquity, have a power of weaving religion in and out of all the web of human life—a thing for lack of which the West is suffering not a little laxity and depression to-day. But I do think that such a religious system identifies morals and manners too much in one unchanging routine, and lacks the sort of ideas that can maintain a continual criticism from within.

#### THE RELIGIOUS SPUR TO PROGRESS

I do not believe that the critical activity of the West—and the changes

induced by this activity—have been mainly due to the modern doctrine of progress. On the contrary, I believe they have been mainly due to the Christian doctrine of the Fall. That is, it comes not from a confidence that everything is continually rising, but from a suspicion that everything, left to itself, is continually falling. In this sense, some of the Asiatic systems are actually too religious. They make the social system too sacred. They do not allow enough for the fact that sin is perpetually rotting away the institutions of men, even the institutions that are founded on ideals.

The truth that inspires all real reformers is sufficiently expressed in the very word reform. Some systems feel no need for reform, because they have

too much faith in form. They forget that if we really desire the form to be retained, we must see that the form is re-formed. The doctrine of the Fall, taken side by side with the other doctrine of the Creation and the Redemption, presents to man two ideas permanently side by side—a standard or ideal to which he can approximate, to which he can at least appeal, and a confession of universal weakness in all the social expressions of it. It is far too large a generalization to say, in a sweeping sense, that this feeling of incessant vigilance and fight against sin is dangerously absent in Eastern mysticism. But I do think it is far less present than in Christian mysticism. And I think this is the real basis of "The Defence of the West."

## PRACTICE OF RELIGION

BY ANANDA

THE CASE OF THE MARRIED

We shall here deal briefly with the case of the married. Of course it is impossible within the scope of this article to touch upon all the various difficulties that stand in their way. Let us however visualise the kind of man about whom we want to speak here. He is married. He has various duties to perform, domestic, social, national, etc. He cannot easily forego any of them. He has to earn money, and it is notorious that little money is at the end of the straight, honest path. But though he is so beset with unfavourable conditions, he nevertheless feels that God is the only quest of life, He is the only reality, the only solace. He feels an ever-awake yearning in his heart for God. What will he do? What is the most effective means of procedure for him?

At the outset it is best to specify that we do not consider that family felicities are necessarily spiritual. Much nonsense is written and spoken now-

a-days about the love-relations between the members of the family as being Divine. Nothing of the kind. For all practical purposes these are all *Māyā*, that is to say, they all bind and lead astray, and do not confer any spiritual freedom. From this it will be clear that a householder's spiritual path is not strewn with roses. He cannot easily overcome the charms of his domestic emotions. These prove a great hindrance. They make him forget God. Then there is the question of *Brahmacharya* (continence). It is absolutely necessary that in order to progress spiritually, one must practise continence. But it is superfluous to mention that it is no easy practice for a householder. Let us not be understood to mean that the householder's life is not good for any one. We do not mean that. It is quite probable that a monastic life would be worse for many. They will fare much worse if they renounce the world.

It all depends on one's spiritual conditions. Unless one is ready for complete renunciation, it is better and more wholesome for one to live on in the world. That would be more helpful to him. But one must never forget that the householder's life is only a concession to our spiritual weakness, that that is not the highest form of life, and that the highest spiritual development consists in completely renouncing and forgetting all things other than God. We must remember that whatever our *present* condition and form of life, the goal is all God and no world. All our heart's love for Him alone, for none else. All our powers consecrated to His blessed feet, to none and nothing else. That is the goal for *all*, monks or householders.

Such being the case, the position of the householders at once appears to be nothing easy. Let there be no delusion about it. But let there be also no despair.

The householder must try to practise as much continence as possible. Sincere efforts should be made by him, if he is serious about spirituality. Sri Ramakrishna said that after two children were born, the husband and wife should live like brother and sister. If the daily life of the couple is devoted to some altruistic or spiritual ideal, the overcoming of the lures of the flesh becomes easier. It is good to conceive some subsidiary ideal as a help to the spiritual ideal,—service of the neighbours, or some intellectual ideal. But it would be best if both husband and wife feel the same spiritual yearning. That will take the mind away from the body, and instead of being hindrance to each other, the husband and wife would help each other greatly. But in all cases they must make the habit of sleeping in separate rooms, or at least in separate beds. This is a wholesome and helpful practice.

Sri Ramakrishna used to prescribe another practice to the householders—

repairing to solitude from time to time. The great good that accrues from this cannot be overestimated. From our birth, we have been living in the atmosphere of worldliness. We have forgotten that there is a higher atmosphere of freedom and spiritual elation beyond the murky sky. Spiritual growth is nothing if not walking the lone path. We have to retrace our steps and enter a new path. The mind, however, refuses to exert itself in any original venture. It is fond of repetition, it wants to move along the ruts,—that is easier. But this retracing the steps and visualising the new horizons become easy and possible, if we go out of the worldly atmosphere from time to time. We can then sense the new. We can watch the mind and its vagaries. We can know by which ties we are bound to the world. We can feel the dominant tendencies of our mind. We can above all feel in our inmost heart the uplifting touch of the spirit. Such repairing into the solitude must be done in a prayerful spirit, and not in the mood of excursion. It is quite possible that at first the period of retirement would be only short. Few of us know what a trial solitude and silence are. We are habituated to the surface of life, to its bustles and distractions. We feel like one held under water if we are too long alone. So at first let us have short periods of solitude, one or two days at a time. Then we may have longer periods.

A practical difficulty is that solitary places are not always available at hand. Large meadows are helpful. To watch the infinite blue sky or the sea is helpful. To lose oneself in the star-spangled darkness of the night is profitable. And we may find out a solitary nook in our house and spend sometime in that every day. Isolation from the world,—that is the need.

Another point emphasised by Sri Ramakrishna was the company of the devout and *Sādhus*. This is extremely effective in bringing home to us the reality of God and spiritual life. Devotees

are the witnesses of God. Through them God Himself is manifested. We receive through them the touch of God Himself. And it is literally true that even a moment spent in the company of a true devotee produces lifelong results. It is true that real devotees are not plentiful. We may read the scriptures and lives of saints,—for they are also wonderfully effective, and we may visit temples and holy places. By the way, a spiritual aspirant should not visit such places in the spirit of a social reformer. Social reform is all right. But our purpose is somewhat different from social reform. One visits a temple and returns filled with spiritual elation. Another observes the unclean conditions of the temple's vicinity and returns disgusted or filled with the idea of reforming it. Among them, who gains more?

Of course, the householder aspirant should practise spiritual *Sādhana* regularly. He must approach a Guru and receive instructions from him. And to this practice, he must devote as much time as possible. But it is evident that a greater part of his time and energy have to be devoted to unspiritual pursuits. That is a great waste unless some compensation is made. That can be possible through the practice of *Karma Yoga*, and also

through the practice of spiritualisation of which we spoke at length last month. We shall speak of *Karma Yoga* in a subsequent issue.

The one great advantage of the householder whose case we are discussing, is that he already feels a great yearning for God. He feels that he must absorb himself absolutely in God, but finds that the world is distracting his attention. Naturally his one constant effort will be to eliminate this unhappy element. Let him employ any means he finds effective to do so. Let him pray sincerely to God to draw his whole mind and energy to Him so that he may perceive Him and Him alone and nothing else. This earnest endeavour and sincere prayer will open new opportunities to him. But let him be very alert and let him never stoop to any compromise.

By the way, Sri Ramakrishna used to advise all householders to look upon their family with a dispassionate eye, loving and serving them earnestly, but knowing all along that they belong to God and not to him, just as a maid-servant in a rich man's house loves and serves all her master's children as her own, but knows in her heart of hearts that she has really no hold on them and may any moment be sent away.

## ASHTAVAKRA SAMHITA

BY SWAMI NITYASWARUPANANDA

### CHAPTER IX

#### ·INDIFFERENCE TO THE WORLD

अष्टावक्र उवाच ।

कृताकृते च द्वन्द्वानि कदा शान्तानि कस्य वा ।

एवं ज्ञात्वेह निर्वेदाद्भव त्यागपरोऽमरी ॥१॥

कृताकृते The done and the not done द्वन्द्वानि pairs of opposites च and कदा when कस्य whose वा or शान्तानि ended (अवधि) एवं thus ज्ञात्वा knowing इह in this निर्वेदात्

through indifference त्यागपरः intent on renunciation चरती desireless (*lit.*, one not observing any vow or performing religious rite or ceremony) भव be.

1. Duties done and not done as well as the pairs of opposites—when<sup>1</sup> do they cease and for whom? Knowing this, be intent on renunciation and desireless<sup>2</sup> through complete indifference to the world.

[*When etc.*—Our life is a mixture of opposites—joy and sorrow, success and failure, good and evil, and the like. And we have always preferences, which cause us to choose certain things to be done and avoid other things. Hence our conception of duty. So long as we consider this world to be real, we cannot escape the pairs of opposites and eradicate the sense of duty. The only way out of this state of things is to realise the hollowness of the world, and renounce it.

<sup>2</sup> *Desireless* —*Lit.*, one not performing a religious rite or observing a vow. Such performance or vow presupposes desire for earthly or heavenly prosperity. Hence desireless.]

कस्यापि तात धन्यस्य लोकचेष्टावलोकनात् ।

जीवितेच्छा बुभुक्षा च बुभुत्सोपशमं गताः ॥२॥

तात Child कस्य whose अपि even धन्यस्य of the blessed one लोकचेष्टावलोकनात् by observing the ways of men जीवितेच्छा desire to live बुभुक्षा desire to enjoy बुभुत्सा desire to know च and उपशमं cessation गताः attained.

2. My child, who is that blessed person whose desires to live, to enjoy and to know have been extinguished by observing<sup>1</sup> the ways of men?

[*Observing etc.*—Men are subject to birth and death, and their desires for enjoyment and experience know no end. As a result their miseries are also endless. Should anyone take lesson from man's present conditions, one would at once give up all desire to live, enjoy or experience.]

अनित्यं सर्वमेवेदं तापत्रितयदूषितम् ।

असारं निन्दितं हेयमिति निश्चित्य शाम्भति ॥३॥

इदं This सर्वं all अनित्यं transient तापत्रितयदूषितं vitiated by threefold misery असारं unsubstantial निन्दितं contemptible हेयं rejectable इति this निश्चित्य knowing for certain (ज्ञानी a wise one) शाम्भति becomes calm.

3. A wise man becomes quiet by realising that all<sup>1</sup> this is vitiated by the threefold<sup>2</sup> misery and is transient, unsubstantial, contemptible and worthy to be rejected.

[*All etc.*—All phenomena.

<sup>2</sup> *Threefold etc.*—As mentioned in note 1 of verse 16, chap. II.]

कोऽसौ कालो वयः किं वा यत् इहानि नो नृणाम् ।

ताम्युपेक्ष्य यथाप्राप्तवर्ती सिद्धिमवाप्नुयात् ॥४॥

यत् Where वृषां of men इहानि pairs of opposites नो not (सन्ति are) असौ that कालः time कः what वयः age वा or किं what तानि those उपेक्ष्य quitting यथाप्राप्तवर्ती one who rests content with what comes of itself सिद्धिं perfection अवाप्नुयात् attains.



4. What is that time or that age in which the pairs of opposites do not exist for men? One who is content with what comes of itself, quits these and attains perfection.

[No time or age can be imagined, in which there will be unalloyed good and joy, unattended by evil and sorrow. We cannot, therefore, hope to gain infinite joy and peace in course of life's process. We have to realise this supreme fact and seek another means of attaining peace. It is to go out of the process of relative life, to remain unaffected by and unattached to the experiences of life, to remain indifferent to them.]

नाना मतं महर्षीणां साधूनां योगिनां तथा ।

दृष्ट्वा निर्वेदमापन्नः को न शाम्यति मानवः ॥५॥

कः What मानवः man महर्षीणां of great seers साधूनां of saints तथा as well as योगिनां of Yogis मतं opinion नाना diverse दृष्ट्वा seeing निर्वेद indifference आपन्नः attained (सन् being) न not शाम्यति attains peace.

5. What man is there, who having observed the diversity<sup>1</sup> of opinions among the great seers, saints and Yogis, does not become completely indifferent (to the worldly objects) and attain quietude<sup>2</sup>?

[<sup>1</sup> Diversity etc.—Referring to the different schools of Hindu philosophy, the *summun bonum* of life being different according to the different schools.

<sup>2</sup> Quietude—Those that have attained complete indifference to the worldly objects and are solely intent on Self-realisation, are sure to be endowed with this rare quality of mind. It is a necessary concomitant of renunciation.]

कृत्वा मूर्तिपरिज्ञानं चैतन्यस्य न किं गुरुः ।

निर्वेदसमतायुक्त्या यस्तारयति संसृतेः ॥६॥

यः Who निर्वेदसमतायुक्त्या by indifference, sameness and reasoning चैतन्यस्य of Transcendental Consciousness मूर्तिपरिज्ञानं realisation of the true nature कृत्वा gaining संसृतेः from metempsychosis (जन्मे man) तारयति saves सः he किं (interrogative) गुरुः spiritual guide न not.

6. He who gains a knowledge of the true nature of the Transcendental Consciousness by means of complete indifference to the world, equanimity<sup>1</sup> and reasoning, and saves others from the world,—is he<sup>2</sup> not really the spiritual guide?

[<sup>1</sup> Equanimity—in friendship and enmity, happiness and misery, and the like.

<sup>2</sup> He etc.—The previous verse disqualifies *Rishis, Sadhus and Yogis* with their various opinions as spiritual guides. The present verse shows that a man who has realised the Truth himself can alone be a spiritual guide. Not merely learned opinions, but actual practice and realisation are the *sine qua non* of a Guru.]

पश्य भूतविकारांस्त्वं भूतमात्रान् यथार्थतः ।

तत्क्षणाद्वन्धनिर्मुक्तः स्वरूपसो भविष्यति ॥७॥

भूतविकारान् The modifications of the elements यथार्थतः in reality भूतमात्रान् nothing but the primary elements पश्य see तत्क्षणात् at once त्वं you वन्धनिर्मुक्तः free from bondage (सन् being) स्वरूपसः abiding in your own self भविष्यति will be.

7. Look upon the modifications<sup>1</sup> of the elements as nothing but the primary elements themselves and you will at once be free<sup>2</sup> from bondage and abide in your true self.

[<sup>1</sup>*Modifications etc.*—viz., the body, mind, senses, etc. In reality all these are nothing but the five basic elements, differing only in the patterns of combination. It is these patterns of combination that make us consider one thing as beautiful and another as ugly, and thus desire the one and avoid the other. But the moment we shall feel all things to be the same, all likes and dislikes will vanish, and we shall be free.

<sup>2</sup> *Free etc.*—Bondage consists in attraction to the body and things of the world, which are the different modifications of the primary elements. Freedom lies in foregoing that attraction.]

वासना एव संसार इति सर्वा विमुञ्च ताः ।

तत्तद्यागो वासनात्यागात् स्थितिरद्य यथा तथा ॥८॥

वासना Desire एव surely संसारः world इति so ताः those सर्वाः all विमुञ्च renounce वासनात्यागात् from the renunciation of desire तत्तयाः renunciation of that (भवति is) अद्य now स्थितिः remaining यथा where तथा there (भवति is).

8. Desire<sup>1</sup> alone is the world. Do you, therefore, renounce all those. The renunciation<sup>2</sup> of that (*i.e.*, the world) follows the renunciation of desire. Now<sup>3</sup> you may live wherever you are.

[<sup>1</sup> *Desire etc.*—Because it is desire that binds us to the world and makes us think it as real, and thus subjects us to the rounds of births and rebirths. The moment we shall be free from desire, the reality of the world will vanish and there will be no more any reincarnation.

<sup>2</sup> *Renunciation etc.*—Because desire is the root cause of the world.

<sup>3</sup> *Now etc.*—One having renounced desire is completely free and can live anywhere one pleases. It will not affect him.]

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### In This Number

*Women and the Arts* by SISTER NIVEDITA, which we have taken from her unpublished Mss., is extremely thought-provoking, and we recommend it to the serious attention of our readers. It has always been the privilege of women in every land to beautify and uplift. The teaching of genuine Indian art to our women has become extremely urgent, in view of the degradation of taste, that has overtaken us as a result of the domination of foreign education and culture. Only our women, with a deep consciousness of the beautiful in life and reality, can restore to us our lost refinement. Knowledge of art, even apart from its high destiny, has

its value. As machines are usurping the functions of providing our necessities, the manual products are becoming dearer and dearer to our heart. This machine age is, therefore, emphasising the need and enlarging the scope of manual artistic productions,— we want to be surrounded by the unique and the beautiful. Our women have in this a great opportunity of gaining some amount of economic freedom. . . . . The present instalment of ROMAIN ROLLAND'S article, *Builders of Unity*, closes his study of the forerunners and contemporaries of Sri Ramakrishna. M. Rolland's next article will describe the Master's meeting with and reaction to and upon some of them. . . . The

*Different Conceptions of Pralaya and their Implications* by KAMAKHYA NATH MITRA, M.A. is a challenging study. A great volume of thought has been compressed within small measures, and claims, therefore, an attentive perusal. Mr. Mitra is the Principal of the Rajendra College of Faridpur, Bengal, and is a frequent contributor to *Prabuddha Bharata*. . . . . SWAMI NITYASWARUPANANDA who contributes *A Seraphic Soul* to the present number, is a monk of the Raniakrishna Order. The Seraphic Soul is Swami Premananda whom the writer knew intimately from an early age. . . . *The West's Defence* by G. K. CHESTERTON is a reply to Mr. Metta's article, *The Challenge of the Orient*, published last month. This also is reproduced from a recent issue of *The Forum* (New York). Mr. Chesterton does not require to be introduced to the students of contemporary English literature. He is reputed to be one of the few great English writers of the present day,—fascinating and thoughtful. Our further comments on Mr. Chesterton's article are published elsewhere. . . . We give as the frontispiece a picture of Swami Premananda, which is reproduced from a photograph taken in his later days. But it does scarcely any justice to the ethereal beauty of the Swami's appearance.

### Jatindranath Das

The passing of Jatindranath Das, an undertrial prisoner, at 1.5 p.m. on Friday, the 13th September, by fasting, at the Lahore Jail, has cast a thick gloom over the whole of India. Jatindranath was a young man from Calcutta, and was the Assistant Secretary of the South Calcutta Congress Committee at the time he was arrested. Jatindranath resented the treatment meted out to some Indian prisoners at the Jail, which he considered unfair, and as a protest against and means of reforming it, he took to absolute fasting which he continued for sixty-two days with unabated deter-

mination till he succumbed. The circumstances of the death are such as cannot but leave a profound impression on the minds of men, especially of Indians. There may be different opinions about the ostensible cause for which he laid down his life. But there cannot be two opinions about the quality of the mind that could show such cool courage, determination, fearlessness and power of endurance. He was a brave youth, with real greatness in him, one whose mental qualities all should try to emulate.

### Mr. Pal's Original Researches

Many of our readers have been familiar with the nimble intellect of Mr. Bipin Ch. Pal in the political field. He has the extraordinary power of taking up any school of political thought, marshalling well-nigh irrefutable arguments in its favour and presenting it to the world as the acme of political wisdom. But perhaps our countrymen outside Bengal do not know that he evinces the same versatility of genius also in religious and philosophical discussions. People in Bengal know this. They have often listened to his wonderful exposition of *Vaishnavism*, and marvelled at the ease with which he set at naught logic and religious experiences and traditions and maintained original theses.

He has lately contributed an article on Vijaykrishna Goswami to *The New Era* of Madras (July, 1929). He claims to be a disciple of Goswamiji, and it is but natural that he should try to make known the life and character of that saint to the wider public. But he is not satisfied with this. He has brought in Sri Raniakrishna and attempted a comparative study between them. There is also nothing unusual and objectionable in this. But it is necessary that when one attempts such a delicate task, one should have a proper knowledge of the subject one deals with. He must carefully gather facts, properly understand and evaluate them and *then* draw

his conclusions. Unfortunately Mr. Pal is supremely oblivious of these obligations. Intellect may be exercised in two ways. We may conceive an idea and then press facts to its justification. Or we may carefully study facts and draw warranted conclusions from them. Mr. Pal's is the first process. Under the circumstances it is useless to attempt any elaborate refutation of his misstatements. We shall present our readers with a few gems of thoughts gathered from his article, with a few words of our own in comment.

Mr. Pal begins with saying: "This wider, if not indeed, world-wide reputation of Paramahansa is due almost entirely to the missionary labours of Swami Vivekananda. . . . When Vivekananda burst upon public notice owing to the challenge which he threw out at the Chicago Parliament of Religions, in the name of Hinduism, Ramakrishna Paramahansa was presented as a living example of the highest achievements of the Hindu faith and culture. . . . Professor Max Muller was induced to write a biography of this remarkable Hindu saint . . ." He insinuates that Sri Ramakrishna has been boomed by his disciples,—he himself was not intrinsically entitled to such recognition. Prof. Max Muller *was induced*. How does Mr. Pal know that the Professor was *induced* to write on Sri Ramakrishna? Would he quote his authority?

"Ramakrishna represented the former (Shākta) strain and Bijayakrishna the latter (Vaishnava) strain of our agelong religious life and thought." Mr. Pal should study the life of Sri Ramakrishna a little more carefully. Sri Ramakrishna was no less a representative of Vaishnavism than of Shāktaism and practised Vaishnavism with as much assiduity as Shāktaism. And his proficiency in both was equal.

Now let us see what he says about Shāktaism:

" 'Brahma Satyam Jaganmithya' Brahman is the only Reality, the

world is unreal. This is the basic text of the Bengal School of Shakti-worshippers. There is in reality no room for 'Bhakti' or the cultivation of the Love of God in the scheme of this Vedantic culture."

But later on he admits:

"The Shakti cult and culture of Bengal have therefore almost from time immemorial sought to realise Bhakti or Love of God, especially in the terms of what may be called Mother-Love."

This self-contradiction he explains by saying that it is the peculiar Bengali race-consciousness that has transformed the Vedāntic Shāktaism into a Bhakti School, analogous to Vaishnavism. But what about the worship of Shakti as Mother in other provinces of India?

According to Mr. Pal, Sri Ramakrishna reached the kind of universalism which Shakti-worshippers have always done:

"The Bengali Shakti-worshippers who attained this highest stage of realisation, rose above all particularistic sectarian limitations. They realised their Kali in every object of human worship. In mediaeval times, these advanced seers saw their special deity, Kali, for instance, in Krishna the Vaishnavic deity also. This was the kind of Universalism reached by Paramahansa Ramakrishna . . ."

"But it was really no new experience in the higher reaches of the worship of Shakti in Bengal. We find in earlier Shakta saints and seers also. It was, in fact, a very general experience of mediaeval Hindu saints and seers."

But he concedes: "In Ramakrishna, however, there was a new development . . ."

Blessed self-contradiction! But even this new development was not really new. For,

"In this, Ramakrishna followed, perhaps without any direct knowledge of it, the line of universalism of Raja Ram Mohun Roy. . . . But the spirit of Ram Mohun's universalism was

clearly present and operative in the subconscious region of Paramahansa's mind throughout the long period of his endeavours after God-realisation."

What penetrating vision! Ramakrishna had no knowledge of Ram-mohun ("perhaps"! ) and yet "he followed"! The spirit of Ram Mohun's universalism was *clearly* present in the *subconscious* region of his mind! Really Mr. Pal's insight is uncanny. But what is that strange commodity, —*Ram Mohun's* universalism? All sane people will agree that unless connection can be established, similarity of ideas must be explained as independent growth. Mr. Pal does not try to prove connection. Yet he concludes a clear presence of Ram Mohun's ideas in Sri Ramakrishna's subconscious mind. Similarity with Mr. Pal is at once causality. But is there really a similarity between Ram Mohun's and Sri Ramakrishna's ideas?

"Vivekananda's Neo-Vedantism was built upon the fundamental teachings of the Brahma Samaj." "Bijaya-krishna . . . continued to the end of his days loyal to its fundamental principles and ideals."

Swamiji's Advaitism, faith in Divine Incarnation, image-worship, monasticism, all these are no doubt based on the Brahmo teachings. But what about Goswamiji's idolatry, faith in Râdhâ-Krishna-lîlâ etc.? What do Brahmos say?

"Paramahansa Ramakrishna had followed the old and mediaeval way for the training of his mind and body . . . Ramakrishna placed himself under mediaeval physical and psycho-physical disciplines."

Then there is this passage:

"Similarly, with a view to kill the lust of the flesh Ramakrishna used to get public prostitutes from the bazar and set them in the complete nakedness of their flesh before him, with a noose placed round his neck, and the moment he felt the least little quickening of the desire for carnal gratification, he used to tighten the noose and

fall into a swoon groaning with mortal pain. By these means he acquired absolute mastery over both his flesh and his mind."\*

What a grotesque invention!

Next comes a gem of spiritual wisdom of the first water:

"In fact these had no sanction for the purification of the flesh and the mind in the Vaishnavic culture of Bengal. Not the absolute suppression of all so-called carnal desires, but their complete idealisation and spiritualisation, has been the objective of our Vaishnavic culture. Though he had been married early in life, like Bijaya-krishna, Ramakrishna lived from his early youth as a celibate. But celibacy had no place in our Vaishnavic disciplines, specially those initiated by Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, because the goal of Vaishnavic Bhakti is the realisation of God in and through the natural affections and emotions of human relations."

Sri Chaitanya and some of his principal disciples were deluded fools. Because they were really celibates and avoided Kâminî-Kâñchana as strictly as the mediaeval Sri Ramakrishna. What a strange Vaishnavism has Mr. Pal invented!

Here is the grand conclusion:

"And without following the mediaeval method of the Paramahansa, Bijaya-krishna reached gradually the same goal and through the regulated and consecrated use of all his appetites and endowments, he attained that perfect purity of both flesh and spirit, without which no one may 'see God.' And it was this direct God-realisation that made him as powerful a spiritual influence among his people as was Paramahansa Ramakrishna; with this fundamental difference, however, that while the Paramahansa's influence was Vedantic and mediaeval, Bijayakrishna's was strictly modern and Vaishnavic."

\*He has referred to this silly story again in his second article on Vijayakrishna in *The New Era* (August, 1929).

We are sure Vijaykrishna himself would have been the first to repudiate this statement. The writer's idea seems to be that Vijay was modern because he lived in the world and begot children and eventually spiritualised these functions (what kind of a thing is "spiritualised" lust?), and Sri Ramakrishna was mediaeval because he was a celibate and destroyed his passions. If that is so, mediaevalism must be a synonym for eternity. For such mediaevalism is indispensable *at all times* for spiritual illumination, and Vijay also keenly felt the need of this mediaevalism. Even Mr. Pal will admit that Sri Ramakrishna's "mediaeval" influence is spreading rapidly among mankind. There is a great danger of the modern world becoming mediaeval. The only way out of this crisis, so far as we can see, is to change the dictionary meanings of the terms "modern" and "mediaeval." That way Mr. Pal's sublime thesis also can be maintained intact.

### What is Progress

Elsewhere we reproduce an article of Mr. G. K. Chesterton, in which he has sought to explain the Western idea of progress in the most favourable light possible. Apparently there is nothing to cavil at in this explanation. But we are afraid he has scarcely been able to meet Mr. Metta's point. Progress in the sense of *adventure* and *criticism* is all right, so long as we are sure that the standard according to which we judge and change has an eternal value or in the real concerns of life we stand on sure grounds in spite of all change. The danger lies in not recognising any eternal values. It is true that to consider anything and everything as having eternal value is dangerous. For what is really temporal cannot be considered eternal without ultimate disaster. Nor should we think that the prevailing opinion is always the right thing. The unchangeability of the East would have been disastrous if its basis had been

merely man-conceived, arbitrary principles. The East does not think so. It believed that there is in man a core of being which is beyond all change and limitation and is, therefore, unaffected by time. To realise it is to become eternal, for all times, and to base society on the principles relative to it is to build a permanent society. The defect of Western society lies in not recognising those eternal values at present, at least not in any appreciable degree. If the West had recognised them, adventure and criticism would have made it more and more perfect. Without this recognition, it is only drifting.

Mr. Chesterton's characterisation that the East is too static is certainly true to a certain extent. But perhaps we should not forget one point in this connection. We have certainly changed in many ways. Contrast the Vedic age with the present age. How were these changes brought about? We admit that an average member of society has always sought to obey rather than criticise his contemporary social ways. He has considered such a criticism as a sacrilege. That has certainly been productive of some evil. But there was a reason. Society, he considered, was too important a thing to be interfered with by common men. The common man was not expected to comprehend the innumerable implications of social laws and conventions. So he left the work of reform to those who were intimate with the race-soul, who were men of spiritual realisations, who could create from within. Those great ones also did not attack social customs directly, but brought about a change in the outlook of life, which being accepted by the people affected society considerably. Our social critics are expected to be men of spiritual vision possessing a far-seeing eye. The East also changes and reforms itself. Only its method differs from that of the West. A little of the Western common man's interest in social affairs and spirit of adventure

and criticism will surely be for the good of India, while the West will certainly save itself, if it discovers the eternal verities and bases its life, individual and collective, on their awareness.

### The First Steps

We are glad to note that the need of the industrialisation of India and the inadequacy of the mere cottage industry programme are being increasingly realised by our countrymen. If we can once correctly visualise our future even in outline, we can safely chalk out the immediate steps in our plan of reconstruction. In this connection, the following remarks of the editors of *The National Christian Council Review* in their July issue are quite apposite and worthy of serious consideration. They say: "We have to realise that, in spite of whatever we may do, the forces behind the modern industrial civilization are too powerful to be arrested. But we can and should profit from the experience of the West and refuse to allow this new fabric of economic civilisation to become the master, instead of the servant, of the human spirit. We should take care that the breaking up of old social systems and building new ones, which result everywhere from the growth of industrialism, do not come upon our rural population with a suddenness that finds them altogether unprepared. . . . It is these villagers who migrate to our industrial centres and form the labour population. So long as they remain illiterate, economically helpless and culturally degenerate, there is the danger of their being enslaved by the present industrial system."

Yes, our immediate next step is certainly to prepare the rural population to ably face the exigencies of the industrial civilisation. But it seems, even before that, or along with it, we must carry on the work of training the educated public opinion with its present lamentable confusion of ideas. Our opi-

nion is that the preparation of the Indian mass mind as also that of the educated classes, lies in making a synthetic union of religion and science. The industrial outlook is nothing if not scientific. Industrial efficiency presupposes a scientific outlook in the practical as well as the ideal life. Science, however, has in the West proved generally detrimental to morality and religion. So also industrialism. The human and spiritual aspects of our individual and collective life have succumbed to the ravages of present-day industrialism, because religion which in its widest sense is the repository and basis of all spiritual and human values, has not been able to meet and ally itself with science in the proper spirit. The chief aim of any scheme of rural education should, therefore, be the creation of a synthesis of science and religion in the people's outlook. The main direction of the growing mass mind being determined, the details may be easily filled up.

This indeed was the scheme of Swami Vivekananda for the uplift of the Indian masses. He exhorted us to go to the villages with simple scientific apparatuses and teach the people the elements of science. But these workers, according to him, should also be religious workers and their teaching in science should be accompanied by instruction in the broad, fundamental principles of spiritual life,—not only in theory, but also in practice. The workers are expected to do their work in the spirit of worshipful service, looking upon the objects of service as embodiments of God Himself. This spirit is bound to endow the educational work they would do and the industrial activities they would initiate with a fine spiritual quality and enthusiasm.

Unless we can carry on our educational and industrial work in an atmosphere of spiritual exaltation, the desired synthesis of science and religion and consequently, an adequate preparation for the exigencies of industrialism, would not be accomplished. This is the programme before us,—the pro-

gramme of Dynamic Religion,—the gospel of the worship of the *Daridra-Nārāyana*, in which religion and science intermingle.

As regards making the masses economically fit, the immediate need is perhaps the organisation of as many co-operative societies as possible and the building up of industries, small and large, wherever and in whatever form possible. It does not seem possible, at the present time, to initiate industrial activities according to a drawn up plan. Without the State behind, no such plan can be largely successful. But the country is already alive to the necessity of rebuilding its industries. Let us take

advantage of every opportunity that opens before us,—a strong determination has never been in vain. The problem of problems after all is village reconstruction with its educational, spiritual, cultural, sanitary, social and economical aspects. If our village reconstruction societies devote their best attention to bringing the industrial life of their villages up to the required modern level, they will not lack either means or opportunities, and in two decades, the whole country will assume a decidedly prosperous outlook. First correct thinking and understanding. Action will follow automatically,—we assume the sincerity of purpose.

## REVIEW

LIVING INDIA. By Savel Zimand. Longmans, Green & Co., Madras and Calcutta. XII+280 pp.

Books about India, and for the matter of that about any country, can be written in two different ways. We may try to comprehend the ideas and ideals as are being worked through and realised in the life of the Indian people. Or we may simply dwell on the surface and estimate it without any reference to the Indian outlook and philosophy of life, or according to preconceived notions. Sister Nivedita's *The Web of Indian Life* is a book written pre-eminently in the former way and Miss Katherine Mayo's *Mother India* decidedly in the latter. The present author has sought to tread the middle course. But we are afraid he has not succeeded much in his attempt to combine ideals and realities in his narrative. Evidently he is not fitted for the task of interpretation. But he is clever at dealing with what are called facts. Thus his résumé of Indian history is barely a summary of the political history of India, though it is well-known that the political aspect little represents the real evolution of the Indian history; his study of Hinduism is scarcely penetrating; and his presentation of the caste system is extremely superficial.

But when he leaves the study of the ideals and engages himself with the facts on the surface, especially the political facts, his

grasp is at once steady and sure. He has taken great pains to be fair to India. He does not minimise the evils that now beset her. Nor does he ignore the points that are in her favour. Barring the fundamentals, therefore, his presentation of India is most often correct. The author travelled extensively in India, met many Indian leaders, and held intimate conversations with them; and the long bibliography witnesses to his consultation of a large number of works on India. All these have added to the value and reliability of the book.

The book is divided into three sections, *Background*, *The Social Fabric* and *Seething India*; and each section is divided into several chapters. The last section and the last few chapters of the second section are devoted to the consideration of the present conditions and problems of India.

The writer commands a clear and pleasant style. The book is profusely illustrated, and has an Introduction by A. E. (George W. Russel) which with its curious reference to the Lokas and the Talas, does not seem to us to have served any useful purpose. Its get-up is excellent. But the incorporation of the picture of two dancing girls as the frontispiece savours almost of bad taste.

THE MOTHER. By Sri Aurobindo Ghose, Arya Sahitya Bhawan, Calcutta. 84 pp. Price Re. 1.



In this neat little book are gathered some soul-animating discourses of Sri Aurobindo on the Divine Power, the Mother of the Universe. It describes four great aspects of the Mother, manifesting as Wisdom, Strength, Harmony and Perfection 'in her guidance of this Universe and in her dealings with the terrestrial play.' Maheshwari, Mahakali, Mahalakshmi and Mahasaraswati are the names given to these four Powers or Personalities.

Introductory to this main theme, the author dwells on the conditions under which the Divine Power descends upon man. Divine Grace and a receptiveness on the side of the aspirant are the two things that make for success. Faith, sincerity and self-surrender are the essential pre-requisites of being a fit instrument of the Mother. But these must be dynamic and pervasive of all the planes and layers of being, mental, vital and physical. A conscious effort on the part of the aspirant is indispensable to the cultivation of these virtues, till the ego is fully effaced and the identification of the self with the Divine Mother is complete. Power, wealth and sex have the strongest attraction for the human ego, admonishes the author. He does not however, approve of ascetic withdrawal from earthly possessions, but recommends their right use with perfect non-attachment and full reliance on the Supreme Will. But it should be noted that formal renunciation has been sanctioned by the *Shastras* and observed by many seers, sages and saints of almost all great religions of the world.

The book combines sublimity of thought with richness of expression and depth of feeling with clearness of vision.

THE WEST. By Dr. K. Kunhi Kannan, M.A., Ph.D. S. Ganesan, Triplicane, Madras. 355 pp. Price Cloth Rs. 2/8, Wrapper Re. 1/8.

The enterprising firm of Mr. S. Ganesan, so well-known as a publisher of choice books, has brought out the present volume which has a great educational value. The book aims at giving an idea of the life and manners obtaining in the West and is written by one, who was once obsessed by his love and craze for the West and things Western, but afterwards suffered a revulsion of feelings, due principally, as he says, to the influence of Swami Vivekananda's writings. The book is not written, as is feared

under such circumstances, in a spirit of ill-will, nor is it a counter-propaganda to the campaign of vilifications against the East; but it bears ample indication of cool judgment, proper study, sympathetic understanding and deep thinking. The author is as much alive to the ugly realities of the Western life as he is appreciative of its virtues. His portrait of the hard conditions of Negro life in America is too hideous, while his feeling has been deeply stirred while depicting the mischievous propaganda of the mercenary missionaries in the West on their returning home from the East. In the latter case he is a bit more sympathetic, for he is not unappreciative of the manifold good that the missionaries have done to the countries they have gone to evangelize, and for any disservice by them, their defence, according to the author, is that they have "to choose between conviction and livelihood."

The book covers a variety of subjects as Competition, Education, Art, Religion, Woman, Newspaper, Humour, etc., and is sufficiently comprehensive. The writer's analysis of the West is that it 'is proceeding fast beyond itself. It sought freedom of worship to find it only a freedom from worship. It respects the sex of women so far that it has nearly unsexed her. It is engaged so much in the pursuit of enjoyment, that it has no time for enjoyment. Instead of man driving the machine, the machine drives the man. \* . \* It is perfecting the methods of science but neglects the science of method. It believes in the survival of the fittest, yet allows the unfit to multiply and outnumber. A habitual trespasser itself, it tolerates no trespass against it. In its self-government, there is little government of the self. It has ceased to be a slave of others, to become, what is far worse, a slave to itself."

According to him the West has disciplined the Will and the East has cultivated the control of Emotion; the West lays emphasis on Right while the East on Duty. As a natural consequence, the West is aggressive, domineering and has achieved a great material success in life, whereas the East is passive, sacrificing and looks to spiritual ends. Now the question is, "Will the East and the West meet?" The author refuses to believe that there can be any fusion of the two civilisations so opposite in character; for though some Eastern countries may be eager to set their borrowed sails,

the politically dominant West will very likely disallow the reverse process. So he raises a great alarm against all policy of imitation and suggests that the best course "is to perfect the institutions which have served well in the past, to increase the resistance to the inroads of a foreign civilisation, and perfect the means and methods of self-expression."

**KAMMA.** By *Bhikkhu Silacara*. *The British Maha Bodhi Society, 41, Gloucester Road, Regent's Park, London, N. W. 1.* 42 pp. Price 6d.

In these few pages a laudable attempt has been made by the author to present the modern readers with an outline of the Buddhist doctrine of Karma. At first he strongly repudiates the misrepresentation of the doctrine by the Western Missionaries associating it through sheer ignorance with the ideas of predestination and foreordination and foreknowledge, and then deals with several of its bearings with modern illustrations. The author says that "the idea of Kamma or Karma is intimately bound up with that of re-birth" and that "in a manner of speaking, Kamma is re-birth, latent and, for the time being, unmanifest; and re-birth is Kamma become active and manifest." Besides such other things, he traces the Buddhistic attitude of charity.

The perusal of the booklet will give some idea of the Buddhist doctrine of Karma. The subject has been treated in a very simple way divested of all logical technicalities. The get-up and printing are good.

**I. THE WAY BACK TO HEALTH. II. CURATIVE HYGIENE AND NON-VIOLENCE IN HEALING. III. VACCINATION AND SMALL-POX.** By *K. L. Sarma*, *B.L. Nature-Cure Publishing House, Pondichery.* 188 pp., 80+136 pp. & 44 pp. respectively. Price Re. 1-8 as., Rs. 2-8 as. and As. 2 respectively.

We have gone through the present books on Practical Nature-Cure with interest. The first book deals with the preventive side of the Nature-Cure and is calculated to serve as a guide to the Life Natural and the conditions of cure, treating exhaustively with dietetics and other aspects of Natural Living, which belong to Health-Culture. The first part of the second book deals with the principles, rules and methods of cure of

all diseases along with detailed instructions on diet, fasting, sun-cure and water-cure. The second part contains chapters on Fevers, Acute Diseases, Chronic Diseases, Destructive Diseases and Injuries with their treatment, and also chapters on Motherhood and Rearing and Treatment of Children. The third, a pamphlet, tries to show, among other things, that small-pox being the acutest of all eliminative processes, requires uttermost submission to Nature.

We hope that the directions given in the books, particularly on dietetics, will be helpful to many in eradicating disease and minimising drugging which is so prevalent nowadays. The author has based his books on the works of some eminent Western writers on the subjects, such as Dr. Dewey, Horace Fletcher and others. His books will no doubt be read with interest and profit.

**THE MYSTERIOUS KUNDALINI.** By *Vasant G. Rale, F.C.P.S., L.M. & S. D. B. Taraporevala Sons & Co., "Kitab Mahal," Hornby Road, Bombay.* xiv+89+vi pp. Price Rs. 3/8/-.

This is the second edition of a book which we reviewed in extenso in a previous issue of *Prabuddha Bharata*.

**SRI GURU GOVINDA SIMHER VANI (THE WORDS OF SRI GURU GOVINDA SIMHA).** By *Kalicharan Bandopadhyaya, Khardaha, 24-Perganas, Bengal.* 38 pp. Price As. 6.

A Bengali booklet containing a neatly written preface and translation of some writings of Guru Govinda and of some Sikh songs.

**THE PLACE OF MAN AND OTHER ESSAYS.** By *Nagendranath Gupta.* *The Indian Press Ltd., Allahabad.* 193 pp. Price not mentioned.

The following essays are contained in the book: The Place of Man; Art in the West and the East; Ramakrishna Paramahansa; Swami Vivekananda; Vidyapati, the Poet of Mithila and Bengal; Rabindranath Tagore, the Man and the Poet; Megalomania in Literature; and The Doctrine of Divine Incarnation. The author ought to have mentioned that most of these essays, if not all, were originally published in Indian journals.

The essays are written in an exquisite style. The treatment is not academical, but is not also superficial. The essays are all pleasant and profitable reading. Readers will find a few new details in his essay on Swami Vivekananda whom the author knew personally. He has advised the disciples of Sri Ramakrishna not to try to ascertain the

influence which the Great Master exerted on Keshab Ch. Sen. But why? In all historical writings such attempts are made all the world over. Surely there is no reason why we should avoid this particular topic. What is wanted is that all relevant facts should be properly gathered and correctly estimated.

## MAYAVATI CHARITABLE DISPENSARY

### REPORT FOR 1928

We have great pleasure in placing before the public the record of work done by this institution during 1928. The Dispensary is within the precincts of the Advaita Ashrama and is under the charge of a monastic member of the Ashrama, whose knowledge of Medical Science qualifies him for this work. Patients often come to us from a distance of even one or two days' journey. We need not say that a Charitable Dispensary like this fulfils a crying want of the helpless people here, who are not only given medicine but also proper diet free. We cordially thank all our donors who by their continued support, notwithstanding the many calls on their purse in these hard days, have

made it possible for us to be of some service to humanity in these distant hills.

In the year under review we had at our Outdoor Dispensary 3,889 patients of whom 3,022 were new cases and 867 were repeated cases. Of these new cases 1,573 were men, 711 women and 738 children. As many as 553 were patients of faiths other than Hinduism. In the Indoor Hospital the total number admitted was 183, a number much greater than in the previous years. Of this number 135 were discharged cured, 43 were relieved or left the hospital and one died. There were 4 in the Hospital still under treatment at the close of the year. Of these as many as 20 belonged to faiths other than Hinduism.

#### STATEMENT OF DISEASES (Indoor included)

Dysentery	...	...	61	Ulcer	...	...	5
Fever	...	...	615	Burning	...	...	3
M. Fever	...	...	99	Injury	...	...	81
Rheumatic Fever	...	...	67	M. Diseases	...	...	100
Debility	...	...	183	F. Diseases	...	...	22
Headache	...	...	197	Worms	...	...	184
Eye Diseases	...	...	743	Gout	...	...	30
Rar Diseases	...	...	40	Lumbago	...	...	10
Paralysis	...	...	5	Toothache	...	...	7
Influenza	...	...	3	Operation	...	...	13
Bronchitis	...	...	10	Ozœna	...	...	3
Pneumonia	...	...	7	Phthisis	...	...	13
Asthma	...	...	80	Leprosy	...	...	3
Cough	...	...	90	Dyspepsia	...	...	120
H. Cough	...	...	3	Boil	...	...	10
Colic	...	...	7	Pain Local	...	...	60
Piles	...	...	3	Tumour	...	...	5
Spleen	...	...	11	Diarrhoea	...	...	240
Dropsy	...	...	3				
Skin Diseases	...	...	69				3,205

## SUMMARY OF ACCOUNTS FOR 1928

	Rs.	A.	P.			Rs.	A.	P.
Last Year's Balance	...	2,530	15 4	Medicines	...	327	7 0	
Donations	...	645	8 0	Maintenance	...	360	0 0	
Interest	...	108	0 0	Instruments and other equip-				
				ments	...	114	13 0	
				Cooly	...	6	12 6	
Total	...	3,284	7 4	Total	...	809	0 6	
				Balance	...	2,475	6 10	

The figures of the Indoor Hospital show an ever increasing demand on the Dispensary. The accommodation we have at present in the Indoor Hospital, is not sufficient to meet these demands. We have only 4 beds at present. We are, therefore, contemplating an extension of 4 more beds with all accessories. Roughly this will cost about Rs. 5,000/-. We hope an institution like this and so urgently needed in a place like these distant hills will not be allowed to suffer for want

of funds. We, therefore, appeal to our kind-hearted countrymen to come forward with their contributions and help us in this benevolent work.

All contributions, however small, either for the building or the recurring expenses of the Dispensary, will be thankfully received and acknowledged by the undersigned.

(Sd.) SWAMI VIRESWARANANDA,  
President, Advaita Ashrama,  
P.O. Mayavati, Dt. Almora, U.P.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### R. K. Math, Nattarampal!, Madras

A correspondent has sent us the following account of the activities of the above Math situated in Nattarampalli, N. Arcot, Madras. It is indeed gratifying that the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda are reaching and being appreciated even by the common village people of a far-off province.

The activities of the Math consist mainly in the diffusion of religious culture among the masses along with rendering service to them in whatever form possible. So long there have been regular classes every day at the Ashrama on the works and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda as well as some Tamil saints. Every Friday 70 to 100 school boys of the village took part in the Bhajana at the Ashrama. In the Vivekananda Sangam at Pudupet at a distance of four miles from the Ashrama, a class on the Gita was regularly held every fortnight and since 1928 it was turned into a weekly class. Touring lectures were also undertaken, four or five every month, in the surrounding villages and towns. Every morning and evening the village boys recite a prayer in Tamil adapt-

ed from the works of Swami Vivekananda. There is a small library attached to the Math and the public are allowed to make free use of its books and magazines. A public well near the Math has been re-excavated seven or eight times by the Ashrama and two temporary sheds erected to the great benefit of the villagers, 75 per cent of whom use the water of that well. In 1928 the Math organised fire relief work at Narasampatti at a distance of five miles from Nattarampalli and rendered great service to the distressed people by providing them with food and clothing, and reconstructing their houses. In 1926 a plot of about eight acres of land was given to the Math by the village Panchayet for the purpose of starting an Industrial Students' Home and the Math intends starting it as early as possible.

We congratulate the Math on the noble work it is doing and wish it greater success and usefulness in future.

### Vivekananda Society, Colombo

The twenty-sixth annual report of the above Society for the year 1928 is a record of good work done. In four years the

number of members has nearly doubled (from 545 in 1925 to 1,021 in 1928) and the amount realised by way of subscriptions has also increased from Rs. 1,931 in 1925 to Rs. 3,164 in 1928. There has also been an increase in the number of members using the Reading Room and the Library of the Society. A special feature of the activities of the Society was the organisation of as many as 31 lectures throughout the year on religious, cultural and other subjects delivered by some monks of the Ramakrishna Order and other learned persons. 9 weekly meetings of members were also held, where interesting subjects were discussed. In addition to the above and the Sunday *Kathâprasangams*, the members had also the opportunity of having Swami Yatiswarananda of the R. K. Math, Madras, in their midst for about a fortnight. While the inspiring lectures of the Swami served as a stimulus to those working in the noble cause of Hinduism, the personal talks and informal discussions they had with him, were a means of better and truer appreciation of the manifold truths of *Sandâna Dharma*. Besides these lectures, the usual Sunday classes started by Swami Avinasananda were held as regularly as possible, there being readings from the *Bhagavad Gita*, *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* and the works of Swami Vivekananda. The annual Gurn Poojas of the sixty-three Saiva saints and the birthday celebrations of Swami Vivekananda were duly performed during the year, some of them being accompanied with music, the feeding of the poor, public meetings and lectures, oratorial contests among children, etc.

A Vidyâlayam which the Society has been maintaining for nearly three years, is being given ample support by the public. It is gratifying that a new account known as the "Debt Liquidation Fund" has been opened in the Ceylon Savings Bank and efforts are being made to clear off the debts incurred by the Society. A building scheme has been prepared by the Society for the expansion and better organisation of its activities, and it may be hoped that the authorities will try their best to put the scheme into practice. The cash receipts on all heads including last year's balance were Rs. 12,369-11 cts. and the expenditure was Rs. 8,207-63 cts.

All contributions may be sent to *Hony. Secy., The Vivekananda Society, Colombo, Ceylon*.

**R. K. Seva Samiti,  
Sylhet, Assam**

The above Samiti completed its twelfth year of very useful service in 1928 of which a report is to our hand. It is a matter of great satisfaction to us that this Samiti has concentrated its attention on the work of village reconstruction along with other charitable, educational and religious activities. The Samiti started a school in Devpur, a village adjacent to the town of Sylhet, and three night schools in three different villages at a distance of seven or eight miles from the town. A very depressed class of people inhabiting Devpur, who lived on alms, have been so much improved morally and economically by the efforts of the Samiti that they at present earn their livelihood by their own labour and look down with contempt upon begging. The Samiti conducts three libraries in three different places. Five lantern lectures also were arranged in different villages by the Samiti. As in previous years, the *Gita*, the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata*, and the works of Swami Vivekananda were read and discussed. Towards general education the Samiti conducted six schools for boys and two schools for girls where altogether 127 boys and girls received education. Besides these, the Samiti has established two experimental night schools among the depressed classes. The Samiti conducts four dispensaries in different places where 5,383 patients were treated with medicine. The Devpur centre of the Samiti treated 68 cases of small-pox of whom 59 were cured, 6 died and three left treatment. It treated 52 cows also attacked with small-pox, of which 40 came round completely. The Samiti administered relief in three different villages in times of cholera. Nursing and cremation were also undertaken.

The present needs of the Samiti are the following:—(i) A corrugated tin-shed for housing the Middle English School of the Devpur centre, for which a sum of Rs. 1,500 more is required. (ii) A shed to be used as a waiting room for the female patients, costing Rs. 250/-. (iii) A dwelling-house for the doctors and the teachers, costing Rs. 1,000/-. (iv) Rs. 400/- for completing a tank. (v) A school-building and a prayer hall among the Patrakhasias of Dakshinkas costing Rs. 1,000/-.

Contributions may be kindly sent to *Secretary, Sri Ramakrishna Mission Seva Samiti, Sylhet, Assam*.

## R. K. MISSION FLOOD RELIEF WORK

We thankfully acknowledge receipt of the following donations from the 1st August to 13th September, 1929 :--

	RS. A. P.		RS. A. P.
Amount previously acknowledged ... ..	8,161 6 3	Sj. Satish Chandra Ghose, Madhupura ... ..	5 0 0
Sj. Bepin Behari Dey, Calcutta ... ..	10 0 0	Sj. Basanta Kumar Sen, Dashani ... ..	19 0 0
Mr. M. N. Pathak, Puri ... ..	20 0 0	„ Nibaran Senapati, Banit-goomi T. R. ... ..	10 0 0
„ Chaudhuri Raghunib Narayan, Ushrahar ... ..	10 0 0	Mr. B. B. Biswas, Khairagarh ... ..	2 0 0
Sj. Shyamapada Banerjee, Kidderpur ... ..	2 0 0	Sj. Abanindra Nath Ghosh, Hashimpur ... ..	6 0 0
„ Taraprasanna Roy, Barisal ... ..	2 0 0	Chaksri Hari Primary School ... ..	2 0 0
„ Prahlad Chandra Datta, Mathablanga ... ..	4 0 0	Midnapur Sevak Samity ... ..	12 0 0
Non-Official Flood Relief Committee with Ramakrishna Sevashrama, Tamluk ... ..	715 0 0	Sj. Kanai Lal Roy, Calcutta Ramakrishna Vedanta Society, Calcutta ... ..	32 13 0
Sj. Karunamay Smrititirtha, Kasba ... ..	10 0 0	Sj. Nitya Lal Mukherjee, Calcutta ... ..	20 0 0
The employees of Messrs. I. I. Chrestein, Lakai ... ..	25 10 0	Mr. S. C. Lahiri, Calcutta ... ..	10 0 0
Syed Abdulla, Ranaghat ... ..	3 0 0	„ M. R. Mukherjee, Calcutta ... ..	1 0 0
Telegraph Institute, Calcutta ... ..	50 0 0	„ T. L. Sabbier, Tirukkann-gavoor ... ..	25 0 0
Sj. Hemendra Nath Dhar, Rewa ... ..	2 0 0	„ D. P. Nathumany, Gangakhed ... ..	5 0 0
Sm. Himansu Bala Dutta, Bagerhat ... ..	5 0 0	Bally Seva Samity ... ..	20 0 0
Mr. K. C. Chatterjee, Pegu ... ..	10 0 0	Anonymous ... ..	2 0 0
Sri Dhoj Rai, Raugamoot T. R. ... ..	5 0 0	Behakair Ramakrishna Seva-shrama ... ..	5 0 0
Thro. Sj. Anrita Lal De, Shwegu ... ..	15 2 0	Sm. Rajkumari Devi, Paita ... ..	25 0 0
Ramakrishna Vivekananda Seva-shrama, Muzaffarpur ... ..	6 0 0	Rangoon Foundry Labour Association, Ahlone ... ..	25 0 0
Anonymous, Jamalpur ... ..	10 0 0	Sj. Prasanna K. Das Gupta, Kalia ... ..	10 0 0
Krishnananda, Allahabad ... ..	10 0 0	Mr. A. Gupta, Naragara ... ..	5 0 0
Sj. Benode Behari Mandal, Ausgram ... ..	5 0 0	Sj. Bidhubhusan Chakravarty, Baria ... ..	2 0 0
Mr. Gude Appa Rao, Yellamanchini ... ..	3 0 0	„ Jagadish Ch. De, Madan-gopalpura ... ..	4 0 0
Sm. Mrinalini Sen, Santipur ... ..	2 0 0	Head Master, Paniparal School ... ..	45 0 0
Malkera Choitodih Colliery Staff ... ..	30 0 0	Sj. Dhanada Ch. Mitra, Hatkhola ... ..	5 0 0
Kalabadha Bani Mandir ... ..	30 0 0	Thro. Sj. Hem Ch. Roy, Delhi-Delvangunj ... ..	32 6 3
Benares Bengalee Youth Flood Relief Committee ... ..	50 0 0	Bholananda Relief Fund, Khulna ... ..	2 0 0
East Bengal and Assam Flood Relief Committee, Ranchi ... ..	40 0 0	Sj. Ramendra Kumar Sen Gupta, Kalabandha ... ..	10 0 0
Ramakrishna Satsanga, Satkhira ... ..	32 0 0		

# Supplement to Prabuddha Bharata

	Rs.	A.	P.		Rs.	A.	P.
Master Syam Sundar Pramanik, Calcutta ...	5	0	0	Mr. G. B. Kulkarni, Bombay	10	0	0
Miss Rama Pramanik, Calcutta	5	0	0	Mahata Yuvak Sangha ...	10	0	0
Sj. Hara Krishna Kolya ...	1	0	0	Sj. Bhupendra Kumar Bose, Calcutta ...	3	0	0
„ Bhusan Chandra Pal, Calcutta ...	5	0	0	Vivekananda Society, Calcutta	65	6	0
„ P. Raj Gopal, Baroda ...	35	0	0	Metropolitan, Institution, Bow-bazar Branch ...	55	0	0
Sm. Govinda Mohini Debya, Malda ...	1	0	0	Kalma Bharakar Congress Committee & Chhatra Sangha, Lakshmi K. High School	20	0	0
„ Durgamani Dasi, Calcutta	101	0	0	Sj. Ganga Charan Mukherjee, Monghyr ...	150	0	0
Sj. Siddheswar Saha, Calcutta	31	0	0	Jagaddal Seva Samity ...	10	0	0
„ Hrishikesh Ghosh, Sukchar	25	0	0	Students, Railway H. E. School, Palhartali ...	25	0	0
Sm. Durga Sundari Devi, Calcutta (gold bracelet), valued ...	22	11	0	Sj. P. C. Basu, Razmak ...	10	0	0
Ramakrishna Sevashrama, Tamluk ...	85	0	0	„ Jitendra Nath Mallik, Ranchi ...	5	0	0
Students, Rampurhat Union School ...	64	5	6	„ Harendra Chandra Ghosh, Schachar ...	2	0	0
Sj. Hari Narayan, Allahabad ...	4	0	0	„ D. C. Chatterjee, Benares	100	0	0
„ Kumar Kishan Mukherjee, Uttarpara ...	2	0	0	„ Shaligram Bhargava, Allahabad ...	12	0	0
Sm. B. N. Devi, Dhanbad ...	2	0	0	Sm. Saroj Basini Devi, Sirajgunj ...	4	0	0
Bengalee Community, Bilaspur Ry. Station ...	50	0	0	Dr. P. C. Sur, Krishnagore ...	3	6	0
Military Accounts Association, Cawnpur ...	56	2	3	Sm. Maya Devi, Allahabad ...	2	0	0
Sj. J. N. Basu Roy, Madaripur	10	0	0	Sj. Nimai Charan Mukherjee, Kanfali ...	2	0	0
„ Aswini Kumar Ghosh, Raugoon ...	10	0	0	Students, Beros M. E. School	1	8	0
„ Manindra Nath Ghosh, Halmari T. E. ...	6	0	0	Sj. S. C. Gupta, Jamalpur ...	5	0	0
„ Rajmohan Das, Halmari T. E. ...	5	0	0	„ T. N. Deb, Soilerkanda ...	6	6	0
„ Satish Chandra De, Halmari T. E. ...	5	0	0	„ Radha Govinda Ghosh, Patna ...	10	0	0
„ Gajendra Chandra Pal, Halmari T. E. ...	3	0	0	„ M. L. Gossain, Pegu ...	10	0	0
„ Jiva Kantha Bose, Halmari T. E. ...	2	0	0	„ Janaki Nath Saha and others, Directors, Ambari Tea Co. Ltd., Calcutta	20	0	0
„ Upendra Chandra Pal, Halmari T. E. ...	1	0	0	Directors, Nuddia Tea Co. Ltd., Calcutta ...	10	0	0
A Sympathiser, Beharia ...	4	14	0	Mazilpur Sat Sangha, Jaynagore	60	0	0
Sj. Suresh Chandra Tapadar, Midnapur ...	2	0	0	Sj. B. B. Sen, Calcutta ...	2	0	0
„ Surendra Nath Mukherjee, Bhatpara ...	10	0	0	„ N. Datta „ ...	1	0	0
Head Master, Lakpur Simulia H. E. School ...	23	6	0	„ B. Datta, „ ...	1	0	0
Sj. Suresh Chandra Das, Jharria	1	0	0	„ B. Majumdar „ ...	1	0	0
Hindu Sabha, Bharari	15	0	0	Sir Gurudas Institution, Narkeldanga ...	40	0	0
Sj. Banku Behari Roy, Daulatpur ...	14	12	0	Sj. B. Rakshit, Calcutta ...	1	0	0
Sj. Atul Krishna Roy Chaudhury, Bangovindapur ...	10	0	0	Sukumar's mother, Dacca ...	10	0	0
				A Friend, Howrah ...	1	0	0
				Sj. Anukul Chandra Maitra, Beliaghata ...	2	0	0
				A Friend, Patenga ...	200	0	0
				Sj. Ashutosh Laha, Singair	32	5	0
				A Sympathiser, Ranaghat ...	3	0	0

# Supplement to Prabuddha Bharata

	Rs.	A.	P.		Rs.	A.	P.
Students and Teachers, B. K. High School, Benodepur	10	0	0	Kamala High School, Calcutta	33	1	3
Sj. Surendra Nath Sarkar, Enayet Bazar, ...	10	0	0	Treasurer, F. B. and Assam Flood Relief Committee, Chandernagore ...	100	0	0
Rai Satish Chandra Chatterjee Bahadur, Krishnagore ...	5	0	0	Sj. Rajani Kanta Purakayastha, Mirashi ...	5	0	0
Sj. Rebati Mohan Singha, Hamiltongunj ...	3	0	0	„ Rohini Kumar Biswas, Jalpaiguri ...	16	0	0
„ Manoranjan Tagore, Ramgopalpur ...	2	0	0	„ Gobardhan Das, Pail ...	5	0	0
Dr. A. N. Datta, Berhampur ...	10	0	0	R. K. Sevashrama, Silchar ...	177	12	0
Thro. Mr. N. K. Bakshi, Simla	200	0	0	Major J. L. Sen, Silchar ...	4	4	0
Sri Sri Sinhabahini Mata, Calcutta ...	10	0	0	Nawgong Relief Committee ...	70	0	0
Sj. Chandra Krishna Ghosh, Ramkrishnapur ...	1	0	0	Thro. Mr. R. C. Chatterjee, Dacca ...	6	10	0
Students, Radhanagore Mazumdar Academy, Patna ...	15	0	0	Baharpur Daridra Narayana Bhandar ...	100	0	0
Sm. Subba Lakshmi, Vayalur	10	0	0	Sj. Durgaprasanna Chatterjee, Calcutta ...	28	4	0
Sj. Giridhar Lal Manik Lal, Sankheda ...	10	0	0	Habiganj Relief Committee ...	50	0	0
„ Giridhar Lal Jayjivan, Sankheda ...	5	0	0	Cachar Relief Committee ...	1,650	0	0
„ Magan Lal Manik Lal, Sankheda ...	2	0	0	Sj. Gauri Charan Roy, Khasia Hills ...	10	0	0
„ D. C. Munshi, Pegu ...	5	0	0	Mrs. S. C. Roy, Calcutta ...	5	0	0
Dr. B. D. Mukherjee, Calcutta	20	0	0	Mr. K. H. Limaye, Ramtek ...	10	0	0
In memory of Mr. H. G. Mather by his sister, Bombay ...	15	0	0	Gentlemen of Namrup T. E. ...	12	8	0
Mr. C. H. Das, Kyaiklat, Burma ...	5	0	0	Ilita Sadhan Bhandar, Muga-beria ...	10	0	0
Sj. Amrita Lal Bose, Syedpur	1	0	0	Sm. Nivangani Devi, Morighyr S.D.O. On behalf of Victoria Dramatic Club, Narayanganj ...	310	9	0
Sabour Station Staff ...	2	12	0	Sj. Sukdayal Kaput, Calcutta	5	0	0
Sj. Jananipada M n k h e r j e e, Saroda ...	5	0	0	Parsibagan R. K. Society, Cal.	13	0	0
„ Priya Nath Banerjee, Calcutta ...	5	0	0	Students' Shiksha Mandir, Cal.	2	3	6
„ Ramani Mohan Mitra, Maliara ...	25	0	0	Mr. R. Anantaram, Shahadara Mills ...	27	0	0
Ramakrishna Sevashrama with B. K. High School and some young men, Benodepur ...	55	0	0	„ P. N. Sen Gupta, Bhulnasar	2	0	0
A Friend, Pili Estate ...	100	0	0	„ N. C. Mazumdar, Upalti ...	5	0	0
Mr. N. Kannaviran Pillay, Raub	102	4	0	Assam Flood Relief Committee, Bhandara ...	600	0	0
„ K. K. Nanjappa, Kanjan	20	0	0	Gentlemen, Hatigar & Khayrabari ...	51	11	0
„ K. Sen Gupta, Calcutta ...	1	0	0	Indian Staff with labourers, Konkhoysa Collieries ...	20	0	0
Staff and Students, Normal School, Chittagong ...	14	10	0	Jharia Raj H. E. School ...	10	0	0
Mr. P. N. Mallik, Calcutta ...	25	0	0	Sj. Kotiswar Guha, Algi ...	2	0	0
„ A. N. Banerjee, „	1	0	0	Bengalee Boys High Schools thro. R. K. Math, Delhi	153	0	0
„ Mathura Prasad, Meerut ...	5	0	0	Sm. Nirupama Devi, Cal. ...	5	0	0
Sj. Jnanendra Kumar Mitra, Calcutta ...	4	0	0	Masair Yogananda Sevashrama	20	0	0
				Rai Sahab Raghunath Das, Allahabad ...	10	0	0
				Sj. Tulsidas Mukherjee, Purulia	2	0	0
				Thro. Vice President, R. K. Ashrama, Malda ...	150	0	0



# Supplement to Prabuddha Bharata

	Rs.	A.	P.		Rs.	A.	P.
R. K. Seva Samity, Nowabgunj	10	0	0	Sj. Dwarakadas Tribhubandas	101	0	0
Thro. Mr. M. K. Bose, Taungy	18	4	0	„ Amersey Damodardas ...	101	0	0
Mr. S. S. Blolanti, Cawnpore	25	0	0	„ Chunilal Bhaichand Mehta	101	0	0
Account Offices' Association,				„ Kustomji P. Kerawalla ...	101	0	0
Bengal, Post & Telegraph				„ Bhasanji Molraj ...	101	0	0
Branch ...	100	0	0	„ Tulsidas Vallavdas ...	100	0	0
Danabhaudar Merchants, Ka-				Messrs. Kotak & Co. ...	51	0	0
thiawar Gujrat Flood Re-				Sj. Amarlal C. Saha ...	25	0	0
lief Committee ...	1,000	0	0	„ Kustomji Jamshedji Mehta	25	0	0
Rashtriya Stree Sabha, Fomby	1,000	0	0	Stail, Bombay Life Assurance			
Bombay Bengali Jewellers' As-				Co. ...	7	3	0
sociation Flood Relief				Sj. Dilrajadhyaksha ...	5	0	0
Committee ...	501	0	0	Mr. Jehangir P. Pucca ...	3	0	0
Cotton Merchants & Muka-				A. B. C. ...	2	0	0
damas' Association, Bom-				Mr. Manisankar M. Mehta ...	1	0	0
bay ...	500	0	0	„ Madhusudan M. Mehta ...	1	0	0
A Parsee Friend, Poona ...	500	0	0	„ K. K. Mukherjee ...	1	0	0
Dacca Relief Committee ...	209	0	0	Thro. Sj. Febati Mohan Bhatta-			
Karingunj R. K. Seva Samity	146	3	0	charya, Bawdwin ...	19	0	0
R. K. Mission Seva Samiti,				Technical Institution A. B. R.,			
Sylhet ...	316	5	0	Pahartali ...	5	10	0
Baliati R. K. Mission ...	55	0	0	Carriage Shop, do. ...	24	6	0
Staff, Chittagong Co. Ltd.,				Sm. Sahasini Hait, Hanschara	10	0	0
Sirajgunj ...	5	0	0	„ Apurbamayee Gayen, do.	10	0	0
Sm. Gajamukta Chowdhurani,				„ Giribala Gayen, do.	10	0	0
Patenga ...	8	0	0	Sj. Dhananjay Gayen, do.	20	0	0
Sj. Gangasaran Rustogi, Bijnore	5	0	0	„ Nripendra Nath Sahoo, Cal.	50	0	0
Manager's Office, R. B. S. R.,				Tamulia M. V. School ...	5	5	0
Baroda ...	16	10	0	Sj. Santi Sagar, Mirzapur ...	10	0	0
Head Master, Bolpur H. E.				Dr. N. K. Das, Vandoon ...	10	0	0
School ...	55	0	0	Sj. Umesh Chandra Dutt, Peari-			
Sj. Prannath Aga, Saharanpur	5	0	0	nagore ...	19	0	0
Boys, Jamtara ...	15	0	0	„ Atul Prasad Sen, Lucknow	150	0	0
Sj. Radhaballav Saha, Cal. ...	1	0	0	„ Jogesh Chandra Acharya,			
Dr. K. C. Singha, Singapore ...	15	0	0	Badalgachi ...	15	0	0
Sj. Bhagawat Sahaya, Moth ...	1	0	0	„ Bhnpendra Chakravarty,			
Sj. Ranjit Sinha, Siratha ...	5	0	0	Agartala ...	2	0	0
„ Ramesh Chandra Roy				„ Pasupati Bose, Calcutta ...	5	0	0
Chaudhury, Pakokku ...	5	0	0	„ Anukul Chandra Mitra,			
				Beliaghata ...	25	0	0
From Bombay :--				Students, Nivedita Girls'			
A. B. Flood Relief Committee	140	0	0	School, Baghbazar ...	40	9	0
Messrs. Rathi & Co. ...	50	0	0	Servants of India Society,			
„ Bhai Das Kurson Das				Bombay ...	2,225	0	0
& Co. ...	101	0	0	Sj. Narainbhai Keshavlal,			
„ Alubaker Abdul Raha-				Petlad ...	4,990	0	0
man & Co. ...	191	0	0	„ Kali Kinkar De, Saloo ...	0	8	0
„ Arjan Khimji & Co. ...	191	0	0	„ Manindra Chandra Ghosh	0	14	0
„ Ramdas Khimji & Co.	101	0	0				
Sj. Kusal Chand Gopal Chand	101	0	0				
Mr. K. S. Nicholson ...	191	0	0	Total	29,334	5	0

# Prabuddha Bharata

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Volume XXXIV



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“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।”

“Arise ! Awake ! And stop not till the Goal is reached.”

## UNPUBLISHED LETTERS OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

XX

(To an English Disciple)

SAN FRANCISCO,  
26th May, 1900.

All blessings on you. Don't despond in the least. *Sri wah Guru ! Sri wah Guru !* You come of the blood of a Kshatriya. Our yellow garb is the robe of death on the field of battle. Death for the cause is our goal, not success. *Sri wah Guru !!!* . . .

Black and thick are the folds of sinister fate. But I am the Master. I raise my hand, and lo, they vanish ! All this is nonsense and fear. I am the Fear of fear, the Terror of terror. I am the fearless secondless One. I am the Ruler of destiny, the Wiper-out of fact. *Sri wah Guru !* Steady, child ! don't be bought by gold or anything else, and we win !

XXI

PARIS,  
17th August, 1900.

If things go ill or well, -  
If joy redounding shows her face,  
Or seas of sorrow swell,—  
'Tis but a dream, a play,  
A play where each has part,  
Each one to weep or laugh as may ;  
Each one his robe to don ;  
Its scenes, alternative shine and rain.

Thou dream, Oh blessed dream!  
 Spread near and far thy veil of haze,  
 Tone down the lines so sharp,  
 Make smooth what roughness seems.  
 No magic but in thee!  
 Thy touch makes deserts bloom to life,  
 Harsh thunder blessed song,  
 Fell death the sweet release.

## SRI RAMAKRISHNA ON HIMSELF

[FROM THE DIARY OF M.]

It was about 8 o'clock at night on Sunday, the 9th August, 1885. M., Rakhal, Mahimacharan and a few other devotees were sitting on the floor of Sri Ramakrishna's room at Dakshineswar. The Master came down from his bedstead to Mahimacharan and said to him:

"I have long thought of telling you one thing, but I have not been able yet. I want to tell you to-day. It is about my spiritual condition. You say that whoever will practise *Sādhana* will realise it. That is not so. There is some speciality about it."

This declaration of the Master filled the devotees with great wonder. They listened with bated breath. The Master continued:

"She, Mother, has *spoken* to me. I have not merely seen Her, She has also talked with me. I was at the *Vat-talā*.\* She came out of the Ganges to me. Oh, how She laughed! She played with my fingers and cracked them in fun. And then She spoke. She talked with me!

"I cried for three days at a time. And She revealed to me all the contents of the *Vedas*, *Purāṇas* and *Tantras*.

"One day She showed me the secret of the fascination of *Māyā*. A small light appeared in my room. Then it began to grow larger and larger. At last it engulfed the whole world.

"I was also shown the vision of a large tank covered with sedges. Wind blew and removed some of the plants and water reappeared. But very soon the removed plants came back dancing and recovered the exposed water. It was indicated that the water was the *Satchidānanda*, the sedges the *Māyā* which obstructed His vision. Even if there are momentary glimpses, *Māyā* covers Him again.

"I am shown what kinds of devotees would visit me even before they come here. I was shown the *Sankirtan* procession of Chaitanyadeva winding between the *Vat-talā* and *Vakul-talā*. In it I saw Balaram and also him (M.).

"I had a vision of Keshab Sen even before I met him. I saw in a state of *Samādhi*, the vision of Keshab and his followers. A crowd of people sat before me filling the room. Keshab was looking like a peacock spreading its tail. This spread tail was his followers. A red gem glittered on his head, which was a sign of *rajas*. Keshab was saying to his followers: 'Listen to what he is saying.' I said to Mother: 'Mother, they are votaries of English ideas. Why should I talk to them?' Mother explained to me that such things would happen in this *Kali-yuga*. And they took the name of Hari and Kali from here. That is why Mother took away Vijoy from Keshab's church. But She did not go to the Adi (Brahm) Samai.

\*A place in the Dakshineswar Temple.

"(Pointing to himself) There is something in this. Many days ago, a boy, named Gopal Sen, used to visit me. He who is in this, placed His foot on his chest. Gopal went into ecstasy and said: 'It will be long before you can come. I cannot live anymore among the worldly-minded.' He bade me adieu and went home. Afterwards I learnt that he had given up his body.

"I had all wonderful visions. I saw the Undivided Existence-Knowledge-Bliss in which there was a partition. On one side were Kedar, Chuni and other devotees who believed in God with forms. On the other side was an effulgent light as brightly red as brick-dust. Within this light sat Narendra immersed in *Samādhi*. Seeing him thus absorbed, I called him by name. He slightly opened his eyes and I came to know that he had been born in this form in a *Kāyastha* family of Simla (Calcutta). Then I prayed to Mother, saying: 'Mother, bind him with *Māyā*, or he will give up his body in *Samādhi*.' Kedar who believes in the form of God peeped over at Narendra, then started up and fled away.

"That is why I think that the Mother Herself has been born and is playing within this (his body) as a devotee. When I first reached this state, my body became effulgent. My chest assumed a red hue. I then prayed to Mother, 'Mother, do not manifest Thyself outside, repair within.' That is why I have got such a poor body now. Otherwise people would not have given me peace. There would have been crowds of people about me if I had that effulgent body. There is no outward manifestation now. Worthless people go away. Only those who are pure devotees will remain. Why have I this illness? It also has the same significance.

"I had a desire to be the prince of devotees and I prayed to the Mother accordingly. Again, the desire arose in my mind that those who had called sincerely on the Lord, must come here,—they must. You see that is what

is happening,—those very people are coming.

"My father knew who is in me. He had a dream at Gaya in which Raghuvir appeared and said: 'I shall be your son.'

"Even He is dwelling within me. Renunciation of *Kāminī* and *Kāuchana*!—Is that possible for me? I have not experienced sexual intercourse even in dream!

"The naked one (Tota Puri) instructed me in the *Vedānta*. In three days I realised *Samādhi*. When he saw my *Samādhi*, he exclaimed: 'Oh, what is this!' Later on he came to know who was in me and asked me to let him go. On hearing him I went into ecstasy and said: 'No, you cannot go on any account, until I have fully realised the *Vedānta*.' After that, day and night I lived with him and discussed *Vedānta*. The Brāhmani said: '*Bābā*, do not discuss *Vedānta*, this will impair your devotion.'

"I said to Mother: 'Mother, how will this body be maintained, and how can I live with *Sādhus* and devotees? Provide me a rich man.' That is why Sejo Babu (Mathuranath) served me for fourteen years.

"He who is within this, informs me beforehand to what spiritual planes the coming devotees belong. When I see the vision of Gouranga before me, I know that a devotee of Gouranga is coming. If a *Shākta* is to come, I have the vision of *Shakti*—Kali.

"At the time of the evening service in the Temple, I used to go to the roof of the *Kuthi* and cry: 'Oh, where are you? Come, come!' See they are all coming by and by.

"He Himself is dwelling within this; and is communing with the devotees.

"And the devotees themselves!—What wonderful states are theirs! Naren junior has his breath stopped automatically.\* He also goes into *Samādhi* in which he remains sometimes

\* This indicates a high state of spiritual concentration.

for two and half hours ; and sometimes even more. How wonderful !

"I have performed all kinds of *Sādhana*,—*Jñāna Yoga*, *Bhakti Yoga*, *Karma Yoga*, and also *Hatha Yoga* for increasing the span of life. There is someone within this. Or how am I able to live with devotees after having realised the highest *Samādhi*? Koer Sing said: 'I have not seen another man return from *Samādhi*. You are Nanak himself !'

"All around me are worldly people

and *Kāmini-kāñchana*, and yet I have such spiritual conditions and there are continued *Samādhi* and ecstasy ! That is why Pratap (Mazumdar), seeing my *Samādhi* on the steamer when Cook Sahib came, said: 'Oh, he appears like one possessed !' "

Did Mahimacharan understand the Master? After hearing him to the end, he said: "Sir, all these have been due to your previous *Karma*." He meant that Sri Ramakrishna was a *Sādhu* and a devotee, but nothing more.

## THE NEW PERSPECTIVE

BY THE EDITOR

### I

No legal measure of late years has been of such tremendous significance to the Hindu society as the passing of the Sarda Child Marriage Bill in the last session of the Indian Legislative Assembly. It is not the enforced raising of the marriage age that we consider so significant. Late marriage has already become a fact in many sections of the society, and is bound to be such all over India sooner or later. We have, therefore, no sympathy for those who are crying themselves hoarse against the law as being a blow at the chastity of the Hindu nation. Nothing of the kind. A little insight into the logic of events would have convinced them that things were changing rapidly and late marriage was bound to become common in no distant date, law or no law. The marriage customs of a race or a nation are not isolated facts. They are inter-related with many other facts. The socio-economic conditions are dependent on one another. The nature of marriage depends much on the structure of the family and the basic tendencies of the society.

We had occasion to show last year how early marriage was a necessary

concomitant of the joint-family system. A joint family has a certain outlook of its own ; it has a fund of traditions which it guards and hands down from generation to generation carefully. Those who would serve and guide such a family should know how to suppress themselves and minister unto the various tastes of the individual members and must be extremely unselfish. They belong not to their husbands and children alone, but to the entire family. It is well-known how much of the family peace depends on the women. They can easily make a heaven or hell of the family. They, therefore, require a thorough training. They require to imbue their minds with the family ideas and ideals. They must love the different family members with a genuine and earnest love. Such training and love, it has been generally found, are incompatible with grown-up brides. They come with set minds and tastes. They lack mobility. And they are more or less self-conscious. They cannot lose themselves in their husbands' family as a younger bride would. It, therefore, became the custom to marry girls young and bring them up in the family of their parents-in-law, so that they could easily become one of them. Of course such

early marriage would have been disastrous if there had been untimely consummation of marriage. The family was careful enough to see that it did not happen. Therefore, early marriage was the best custom so long as the joint-family system prevailed.

But things have changed. The joint families are rapidly disintegrating. The main reason is economic. A joint family presupposes the living together of all or at least most of the members in the same homestead. Formerly, the economic activities of rural populations were confined within their own localities. Few used to go out in search of service. It was, therefore, possible for them to live together. But now most of our industries are gone. Agriculture alone cannot afford to employ all. Many have gone out in search of employment. And since they have to live most of their time abroad, they take their wives and children with them and reserve their income to themselves. That is but natural. The fact is, the old economic system is rapidly disintegrating and is being replaced by another system which is scarcely favourable to the joint-family traditions.

Added to this economic reason, are several other important facts. First of all, the new system of education. This education has bred a new mentality in us. Whether it is right or wrong, is beside the point in this connection. The mischief is already done. And we can now only reap the harvest. This new outlook is against the old family traditions. Secondly, we must remember that the coming together of several different cultures cannot but produce far-reaching effect on one another. Our women, who have been circumscribed in their freedom, for whatever social, cultural or spiritual reasons it does not matter, cannot learn of the freedom of their sisters in other lands without desiring to enjoy the same to some extent. Wherever there is a possibility of a comparative study there is a chance of change. A change in the states of Indian women was thus inevitable.

Thirdly, the far-reaching change in the outlook of life. Our society has so long imposed on all its members a communistic outlook. Individualism in social and domestic life has scarcely been encouraged. The economic changes mainly and the influence of Western culture to some extent have, however, made us more and more individualistic in outlook. Whoever has closely studied the implications of the Western economic system knows that family life itself, what to speak of a joint family, is almost against the grains of that system. Though in India that extreme result has not yet been produced, yet the growth of individualistic outlook in us cannot easily be denied. Individualism is bound to produce a change in the relationships between the family members, especially the husband and wife. The wife must claim greater freedom. Intellectual education must become an important equipment of the feminine mind. And such an education must result in late marriage. Fourthly, the present is an age of world-wide organisation. The collective life has now become the concern of every individual man and woman. That has added to the duties of our women. They have not only to look after the family concerns, but also to attend to their duties to the community and the nation. Such addition to duties means a mental preparation for them, which is scarcely compatible with early marriage.

It is impossible to ignore all these facts. We are thus not at all concerned at the passing of this legislation in so far as it relates to the raising of the marriageable age. And we do not think that those gentlemen who are now so up against it, would continue their opposition if they closely study the situation. One important fact is always ignored in judging reform measures. People seem to think that whether a certain reform is to be introduced or not, is entirely within their choice, and that they can always introduce a reform which is theoretically the

best. This is an error of the first magnitude. It is not true that what is theoretically the best is always desired by the evolving history of the nation. Changing circumstances create new situations. The history of man is not always a change towards better conditions. Sometimes the situation requires the sacrifice of better things in favour of worse. The ways of life are mysterious. It does not proceed in a straight line. There are ups and downs. Besides it is easy to see that the changing circumstances are not in our hands. So varied and different are the forces that bring about those changes that it is impossible for any man or men to check or destroy them. Suppose that a nation has evolved a high-grade and refined civilization. Its institutions are perfect. Its socio-economic life has been pitched to the high key of its ideals. And its domestic life is very refined and well-developed. Then suddenly an inferior race invades the land, defeats the people and becomes its political master. This change in the political situation produces many far-reaching changes in the socio-economic and cultural life of the people. Two alternatives are now before it: it can stick to its own ideas and perfected institutions; or it may change them in order to adapt itself to the changed situation. In the first case the new problems are neglected; there is no attempt at their solution; realities are ignored in favour of ideals, for though we may overlook the changed circumstances, they will nevertheless not cease from reacting on us. The result will be that we shall lose national vitality. Being estranged from realities, having lost touch with the actualities of life, we shall slowly debilitate ourselves and eventually die of inanition. The ideals themselves will become vague and verbal and not powerful and real. After all, ideal or no ideal, a man or a nation lives only in close association with and correspondence to the realities. Mere ideas or ideals are nothing if there is not an intense

life and reality behind. In the second case we are in close touch with the realities. That makes us vital and saves us from death. But realities do not always submit to our dictation; in fact it is only under their dictation that we can live. Therefore, the new problems may not always be solved by the theoretically highest ideas or ideals; grosser ideas and ideals may become necessary to meet the new situation. That is to say, there is no knowing what the altered circumstances will require of us. We only know that life consists in adopting oneself to changing circumstances and that if we are to live we must change ourselves accordingly. This imperative necessity must never be forgotten. Our reformers, and more specially the orthodox section, must not, therefore, think that what they consider ideally the best is also *really* the best. A strong sense of reality should always be our guide in judging the movements of the collective life. And if we adopt such a guide, we shall find that late marriage is a destined fact, whether it is ideally the best or not. We must remember that we can no longer check the changing process among our women. The change towards greater freedom and individualism of our women are bound to become more and more pronounced with the passing of time. Can those who oppose late marriage propound a measure by which these changes can be better accommodated? So far as we know, no such measure has as yet been proposed. The only attempt that is being made is to deny those changes, as if it lies in their hands to either accept or reject them.

Does this mean that national ideals should always be sacrificed to the changing circumstances? Are we to drift always? Nothing of the kind. No doubt we adapt ourselves to circumstances. But we must also at the same time find out means by which the new realities may be made to serve the national ideals. We must so interpret them as to reveal ideal contents in

them. It is the glory of man to discover new values in realities. He is not bound to accept the face values. But not all men and nations interpret the realities in the same way. Evaluation is different with different peoples. A nation, therefore, should not only welcome the new realities but also accept them in its own way. No doubt the necessary interpretation is no easy task. Wrong interpretation may clog the flow of life. It may cramp the sense of reality. Or it may lower or injure the ideal. Profound insight is, therefore, necessary in order to find the correct interpretation. One who can do so becomes the leader of the age. When a nation has found such an interpretative genius in any critical period of its history, it may be said to have received a new charter of life from the hands of Providence.

It is, however, conceivable that the conflict between the altered realities and the national ideals may sometimes become irreducible. If and when this happens, national degradation is inevitable. It may be, after some time, a fresh change will make conditions more favourable to our ideals, and then we may take advantage of it and rise up again. But in the present case, can we say such an ultimate conflict has risen between our ideals and realities? The orthodox opponents to the Sarda Child Marriage Act have expressed the fear that late marriage will impair the chastity of the nation. If that be so, we must admit that it is a fundamental conflict, for chastity is indeed one of the bases of the Hindu race. But is the fear real? In our opinion, it is not so. It is our considered opinion that the chastity of our race is not dependent on either early marriage or other external safe-guards. External safe-guards are not unnecessary. But unless there is a deep-seated instinct for chastity in the hearts of men and women, no safe-guards would be of any avail. In fact, we must remember the sociological fact that external observances are often the outer expression of an inner feeling

and not a check to it. They do not indicate the antithesis of the inner and outer, but their identity. In these our degraded days, we have forgotten ourselves. We are ridden with fear. We are superficial. Every race has its instinctive attitude towards chastity. This attitude creates opportunities. The Hindu race has an instinctive and intense liking for chastity. Even if our women are married late or remain celibate, they will remain chaste. Let us, therefore, give up unnecessary fear. The Hindu race will not yet die. It has got much to do in the world. We may boldly face the new conditions; we shall surely triumph.

## II

We, therefore, do not consider the new law significant in this respect. The significance, in our opinion, lies in the fact that it is practically for the first time that a great social change is being imposed on the Hindu society by not merely the Hindus but also the non-Hindus. That is to say, the internal affairs of the Hindu society has become a concern of all India, and not of the Hindus alone. Hindu social autonomy has been thus in a real sense broken. We know that these remarks are applicable to the other societies also, for the law applies to the whole of British India. But here we are concerned with the Hindus alone; and perhaps this significance of the law is more prominent in relation to the Hindus than any other Indian community. Is this interference with our social autonomy to our good? How far should it be allowed? How to obviate the evils that may result from it? What attitude can we, in consonance with the realities, take? These are some of the questions that have been raised in our mind by the passing of this law; and we think Hindu society requires to answer them urgently and thoroughly.

The Hindu society has always a suspicion of interference from outside.



It has always resisted social legislation. In the present case also, even those who are convinced of the necessity and desirability of late marriage, are many of them opposed to legislation. The opposition has expressed itself in the fear that the present law will make police and medical examination of girls inevitable in those cases where there may be any suspicion of the violation of the law. The Hindus cannot countenance that. It cannot be denied that the fear is not quite ungrounded. But it may be hoped that in course of time things may be so improved as to make police interference unnecessary. But behind this articulate fear, there is the deeper uneasiness to which we have referred above. And this uneasiness is not quite unjustified.

The domestic and social laws and customs are the immediate expression of the inner ideas and ideals of a people. It is through these that a people realises its ideals. Of course it is true that they are also products of evolving circumstances. But if they are, on the one hand, the results of circumstances, they are also, on the other hand, so moulded and refined as to become the vehicles of the national ideals. The institutions of every highly developed society fulfil these double conditions. Now if the ideals are subtle and fine, the national institutions also contain many far-reaching implications. It would be dangerous, in that case, to interfere with them carelessly and without proper understanding. The Hindu ideal is the highest conceivable. The Hindu domestic and social institutions are also attuned to that ideal. The experience of ages has made the Hindus change them to the best advantage. Every institution has, therefore, many subtle bearings. Any careless change may easily affect its spiritual implications, which would be disastrous. For this reason, not all and everyone were considered by the Hindus as entitled to introduce changes in social laws and customs. Only *Rishis* could do so. Only they could promulgate new codes

of *Smritis*. It is true that in practice this has not always been true. The laws that now govern our society are not all sanctioned by the superconscious vision of the *Rishis*. But it should be noted that the commentators, according to whom the original *Smritis* are being now administered, do not claim any originality of their own ; they claim to derive their prescriptions from the original books of the *Rishis* themselves. Whatever might be the truth, the understanding is that social and domestic practices should be in accordance with the spiritual ideals of the nation. It necessitates that our social law-givers should be men of spiritual vision. The present tendencies do not fulfil these conditions. If all the implications of a social reform be on the surface, even secular persons can undertake to introduce it. But when they are not so, secular persons are scarcely fitted to do so.

It will be said that in the past ages, Hindu kings have promulgated social laws and people have bowed down before them. True. But then, the kings were not the actual law-makers. They merely enforced what was determined by the sages and Brahmins. It is the latter that actually conceived all reforms, the kings merely carried them out in their dominions. Besides, the state was not in those times such as it is now. It is now almost all-powerful. It interferes in every department of life. And its outlook is essentially secular and political. Formerly the state allowed wide autonomies to people in regard to local self-government, economic organisation, social legislation, domestic customs and religious observances. People chose their own law-givers in their *Rishis* and saints. Life was much less complex then than it is now. How far can we consider the Legislative Assembly a suitable substitute for our old authorities? We must carefully note the nature and capacity of the persons that sit in the Legislative Assembly. Almost all of them are elected or nominated more on account

of their political prominence than anything else. The ordinary leaders of people are not necessarily their cultural or spiritual leaders. It is mainly their worldly position that secure them their legislative position. Then again, they are elected to the Assembly on political tickets. The far-reaching social legislations are not generally made the planks of their election manifestos. Even if this is done, the mere majority of votes secured by anyone is no sure proof that he has spiritual or cultural wisdom. Thus from whatever view-point we look, we are not assured that the Legislative Assembly members are well-suited to enact any social legislation of far-reaching consequences. In no sense can they be called real leaders of the Hindu society. Besides, such is the constitution of the Legislative Assembly that any law may be passed, even if the majority of the Hindu members are not in favour of it, provided all others are. It is true such a situation has not arisen yet. But the present constitution cannot prevent the enactment of any such laws.

The fact is, our present constitution, as it is after the Western pattern, is ill-suited to our national conditions. This political constitution is suitable to only Western social conditions. It is an anomaly here in India. Firstly, no legislature can possibly represent all the interests of the different communities, political, economical, social, cultural or religious, at most only the political and economical interests can be represented. Secondly, the legislature will be representative of not one homogeneous community, but of several communities with divergent customs and traditions. Thirdly, they will be required to pronounce judgment on each other's community, yet most probably most of them know little outside their own communities. This is farcical. This situation, it must be admitted, is scarcely natural. One has little hesitation in saying that such a legislature cannot be safely entrusted with the work of reforming Hindu society.

### III

Yet we have to admit that we cannot indicate any other authority which can enforce the necessary reforms. It cannot be denied that mere public opinion cannot accomplish all that we require. If the public opinion is strong, it may be that a large section will submit to it. But only a large section, and not all. And there is the real fear of the slackening of the reforms when that opinion becomes less vocal. If we want to introduce a wholesale reform in our society and make it permanent and wish that it should be rapid in action, the only agency possible is the Government order,—the authority of law. Formerly the king used to do it. And there were also social *panchâyets*. Now there are neither the Hindu royal authorities nor the authorities of the local *panchâyets*. The *panchâyets* are dead. The people who constitute them are not enlightened. They lack knowledge and mental perspective. They have no vision. And they have lost authority. Even if they conceive any wholesome measure they cannot enforce it. And of course except in the Hindu native states, Hindu princes do not exist. Where can we look for authority if not in the Government? This is our dilemma. What is the way out of it?

Two alternatives may possibly be conceived. (1) We may build up an authoritative body for the Hindu society, which will be able to exercise its will over the entire community. Or (2) we may so change our society and outlook as to fall in a line with the present situation. The first alternative we do not consider quite practicable. Of course Hindu society must have an authority to which it must look for guidance and light and understanding. But it cannot be in any real sense an organised, concretised authority, occupying the position and exercising the power of Government. We have the Hindu Mahâsabhâ. It is at present a deliberative body and in no sense executive. It organises the opinions of

a large section of the Hindu community in certain respects. But if it grows to be an independent power, it must naturally come into conflict with the Government, which is not desirable. When there is national government, the very safety of the nation will require the suppression of any such sectional authorities. Even if such communal authorities are desirable, it is extremely doubtful if those authorities will really represent the best interests of the society. Wherever number of votes decides matters, the truth may not always triumph. In fact, so long as the masses are not enlightened, and endowed with the highest culture, it is scarcely safe to entrust them with the fundamental interests of the nation. And it is needless to say that such an upliftment of the masses is not possible in the near future. The Hindu Mahāsabha or any other such organisation is bound to be constituted, at the last resort, on the suffrage of the masses. Can we expect such a body to safe-guard the best interests of our society?

We do not think, therefore, that the first alternative is quite feasible. The second alternative is thus the only way left open before us. Our course lies in so moulding ourselves as to protect our basic interests and at the same time make it possible for the state to legislate for us without any appreciable injury to our communal being.

But before we can determine that course, let us consider a few facts dispassionately. Let us once for all lay it to our heart that all India is going to become more and more one in many respects. We are going to have the Indian nation. What that implies often escapes us. A nationality should not only have a common guiding principle, and a common aim, but its ways and manners also should be more or less uniform. This latter implication we generally do not consider important. Theoretically this may not appear necessary. But practically this is urgent. Why was not ancient or medieval India

a nation in the modern sense? It is because though the guiding principle and aim were common, the ways and means were so divergent that the consciousness of unity was dormant. Yet it is the consciousness of unity that is so important in a nationhood. We have to create a common consciousness, living and active and very much manifest among all sections of Indians, if we would become a nation. Do we see what that implies? It means that the multifarious little customs and traditions that are keeping the different sections of the country separate, should give way to broad, common, unifying nationwide conventions and institutions. A friend once told us that when he visited the great holy place at Cape Comorin, it was the thought of this need that came powerfully surging into his mind. He was strolling along the solitary coast of the Arabian Sea one morning, when he remembered how there, sitting on the last stone of India, Swami Vivekananda had thought over and conceived the idea of a monastic brotherhood which would devote itself to the service of the motherland. And as he dwelt on the Swami's brooding contemplation, he could not refrain from dwelling on India himself. He asked himself: what is it that India needed most of all? The answer that came to him was the vivid picture of an India divided into thousand fragments held separate by forms and formulas, though one in spirit, her children forgetful of the underlying unity, and intensely conscious only of the non-essentials, the thousand customs of eating and moving, meaningless laws regarding marriage, and infinitely various rites and ceremonies, and the like. And then he felt in his heart of hearts that the only way to create a united India was to obliterate these limitations and emphasise and enliven the inner unitary consciousness. Nothing seemed to him of greater urgency than this for the salvation of the motherland. For, the sense of unity, once created, he felt, would endow the nation with an

unwonted vigour and rejuvenate it in all its departments. We cannot but consider the conviction of our friend as correct and precious.

If we read the signs of the times, we shall come to feel that a large section of our countrymen have also become conscious of this need. The plea for the abolition of caste and religion or for the recognition of all Hindus as Brahmins is nothing but an expression of the inner desire to see India united even on the surface. It is true, of course, that such a tendency may take away from the richness of life which variegation confers. Here perhaps we should remember the important fact of historical evolution, to which we have referred in the beginning, namely, that it is not always the best that the changing circumstances require. We must remember that in this new demand of life, we are really facing the spirit of the West. And history claims that there should be an intermingling of the East and West in India. The West is conspicuous for its social endeavour. If we have taken up the spiritual man for his special investigation and nourishment, the West has taken the normal man, the vital and mental man, for his development. It does not look upon man as an essentially spiritual man, but as what we may call a normal man,—the physical, biological, social, industrial, intellectual being. The spiritual aspect comes little within its purview. The result has been astounding. Normal in its outlook, its products also have been normal. The West has succeeded greatly in devising laws and institutions, by which the normal man flourishes best. This attempt has been so successful that today this normal ideal dominates the entire world, and we in India also are feeling its impact very keenly indeed. Too much stress on the spirit of man, if indiscriminate, may indeed stunt the growth of the body and mind. This is the lesson that the West is teaching us. The perfect civilization would be that in which there would be an all-

round growth of both the normal and supernormal man. This lesson of the West India cannot deny. The standardisation and simplification of social life is the peculiar feature of Western civilization. It will, therefore, necessarily assert itself in India also. We do not mean that Indian social laws are to become replicas of the Western. What we mean is that as a result of the mixture, a golden mean will be achieved. Whatever the future, our point is that we cannot cavalierly reject what the West has brought here to India. There is only one way open to us: to assimilate it. There is no doubt that for some time to come at least, we must concentrate on the similarities rather than on the variations, even at the risk of being monotonous. In short, *we want a great simplification of life and its conventions*. Based on the spiritual fundamentals, life should yet be straight and open, its working, clear and strong and realistic, not fragile, subtle and mysterious, as it at present is. The growth of nationhood requires it. It is thus that the different sections of Hinduism can combine together and Hinduism can combine with Islam and other religions.

We are not unaware that such simplification may well end by strangling spiritual life itself. It may block the channels along which spiritual nourishment is at present flowing in the Hindu society. We know that; and in order to circumvent that danger, we require to spiritualise the new modes of corporate life, which the exigencies of evolving nationalism will develop. We have to create new channels for the flow of spiritual vigour. We want to replace the social intricacies which are now the carriers of spiritual significance by broad universal modes. Unless we spiritualise them, the danger of our becoming secular is certainly great. But fortunately, the predominant Indian tendency to spiritualise has already asserted itself. When Swami Vivekananda asked us to discard all gods and goddesses

for fifty years and serve only the Motherland, when he asked us to see God in every man and when he promulgated the worship of *Daridra-Nârâyana*, or when our countrymen idealise India into a goddess or consider national service as the veriest spiritual *Sâdhanâ*, it is the simplification of the expressions of collective life and the spiritualisation thereof, that is done.

It is along these lines, we think, that the Hindu society is slowly proceeding. And this way the reconciliation between the tendencies of the state and the safety of Hindu society is possible. If we can find substitute channels for the flow of spirituality, we shall not mind if our present contrivances are somewhat neglected. For example, we need not be alarmed at the changes in the position of our women, if we are sure that this new position ensures equal spirituality. We shall not discuss here how the new opportunities of our women are equally congenial to spirituality as the old ones. We dwelt on this in our article, *The Future of Indian Women*, in September, 1927. Similarly the breaking of the joint-family system will not worry us, if we remember that if this is making the individual members apparently self-centred, the enlarged collective duties that are devolving on them are making them sufficiently unselfish.

#### IV

A state which is constituted of various different religious communities and cultures must be at the most secular in its workings. It cannot interfere in the religions. Nor can its operations be limited to what is purely secular in the life of those communities. For, since all the domestic and social institutions are inter-related with religion, those institutions also will have to be excluded from the operations of the State. To do so, however, would be to weaken the state and make it futile. We have seen that separate communal authorities to deal with the social and personal matters cannot be

created without great harm to the state. The idea that no social legislation in regard to any community should be passed by the Legislative Assembly unless at least three-fourths of the members belonging to that community agree to it, is also not really workable. For, in that case, not much reform will ever be carried out. The fact is, once we recognise the fact that a state is to grow in India and India is to become a properly organised nation, we cannot deny that the state must legislate even in matters relating to our domestic and social institutions. Our clear duty is, therefore, to allow the state to do so. But knowing that the legislature will generally consist of persons who may not be after all best suited to so legislate, it is best we organise a spirit of bold progress among ourselves, and seek legislation only for legal sanction. It is urgently necessary that internal reforms are carried out quickly without interference from outside. If we sit apathetic, such interference is inevitable. But in order that reform may not be destructive, we must conceive it from a spiritual point of view. If we remember that the safety and health of our society depend largely on making provision for the flow of spiritual sap to the superficial life of the people, through their daily movements and avocations, our reforms will not go far wrong. And, knowing that the state must legislate for us, and that the state cannot generally do so from the spiritual view-point, but only with a secular outlook, and that it will tend to create uniformity of life between the different communities, we shall seek to so remould our institutions as to give them a rational, humanistic appearance and try to do away with the many peculiar, mysterious customs that have accumulated through centuries. If we agree to this, state legislation will not affect us, for the legislature also will generally act from a rational, humanistic view-point. But the greatest need is to spiritualise the newly created institutions simultaneously. It is urgent that

we make them the vehicles of our deep spiritual emotions at once. Otherwise there is the great danger of our becoming secularistic in outlook. There is a general tendency at present of freeing the different aspects of life from the interference of religion. This is partly right, for that way only can we straighten our socio-economic and domestic institutions. But since our life-blood consists in religion, we must conceive religion also in its purest form possible so that it may imbue the new forms without any way impairing them. Obviously, what we require is a concrete life in which this process has been clearly exemplified. We want a body of men who have gained the required outlook. The examples of such men are the greatest desideratum of the present day.

Much depends on recognising the fundamental spiritual impulse of which the present transformations in India are the outcome. With this recognition, despair and fear easily vanish and we may descry the workings of the Divinity in the changes going on. Our position is peculiar. Certain changes are going on about us, and certain forces are at work among us on which we have no hold. We can but calmly submit to them. The only means of safety available to us is our power of spiritualisation. It is useless to resist, but profitable and urgently necessary to seek

out spiritual contents in the apparently secular. We do not, however, blame those who are too conservative to give up their struggle against the new. This struggle is not without its meaning and use. It would be dangerous to welcome whatever comes on as good. We must examine everything. If and when we are assured that it is inevitable, it should be welcome. How can a nation know that it is inevitable? It must test it. It must try to reject it. When the desire to accept is stronger in the nation, we may know that it has to be welcomed, be it good or evil. Our orthodox countrymen discharge the function of rejecting. By their opposition, we know the worth of the proposed reforms. Of course the secret is neither in their hands nor in the hands of the ultra-liberals. It is in the hands of those who know the central impulse and who have felt the pulse of the time-spirit. They can hope and are not afraid of even drastic changes so long as they see the new spirit growing. In India none can properly understand the significance of the present transformations, unless they have known that a new spiritual outlook is being created here, which is destined to comprehend entire humanity, and which is, therefore, rejecting the narrow and the sectarian in favour of the broad and the cosmopolitan. Obviously the Lord has willed that the Hindus should pass through the ordeal first.

## THE DIARY OF A DISCIPLE

4TH MAY, 1913.

Swami Brahmananda was speaking with several monks and devotees at the Belur Math. K. who was a lawyer asked the Swami several questions relating to his *Sādhanā*. The Swami said in reply:

"It is no use hurrying oneself. Until the right time comes, it is of little avail. The condition of mind before the favour-

able time arrives, is really painful. The mind is swept alternately by hope and despair, smiles and tears. But if you can secure an efficient spiritual guide, he may, by means of certain spiritual processes, push your mind above this level. You may not, however, be able to stand it, if you are pushed up untimely and too high; for example, take the case of Mathur Babu. Oh, what

superhuman powers did he (the Master) not possess! At that time we thought that it was merely a peculiar power with him, but could never conceive the nature of it. Now we feel what a wonderful power that was. One day I said to him: 'Sir, I cannot get rid of lust. What shall I do?' He touched me in the heart, muttering certain indistinct words. All lust vanished from me for ever! I never felt its existence. Do you feel the wonder of it?

"*Prāṇḍyāma* and other *Yogic* practices are not suitable to the present times and conditions. One must observe complete *Brahmacharya* in order to practise them. One's food must be absolutely pure, *sāttvika*, and one must be guided by an expert teacher. Meditation, *Dhyāna*, is at first nothing but struggling with the mind, bringing it again and again from its flights to the sacred feet of the Lord. This very soon heats the brain. Therefore, in the beginning one must not exert the brain too much, or hold the breath too long. When one has real meditation, one may easily continue for three or four hours;—one will feel extremely refreshed in body and mind in the end as after a sound and deep sleep.

"The mind is intimately related to the body. If the stomach is upset, you can never have a good meditation. Hence it is that there are so many restrictions about food. The stomach should be filled half with food and a quarter with water, the other quarter being left vacant for passage of air.

"Do not distress the mind by thinking of sins. For however great a sin may be, it is great only in the eyes of men and not of God. His one glance can scatter off the sins of millions of births. But of course there is the effect of *Karma*. If you do any wrong action, you must suffer from disquiet of mind and other consequences.

"The spiritual practices of the Vaishnavas are nice. They contem-

plate on the *līlā* of Sri Krishna from morning till night. This relieves monotony. But I have noticed that dressing and living like a woman, in the spirit of a lady-friend of Sri Radha, often lead to fall."

14TH MAY, 1913.

At the Belur Monastery, Swami Premananda said at the end of the afternoon class:

"One must have true *Nisthā*—steadfast, wholehearted devotion and attachment to the aspect of God, one has chosen to realise. But let that not engender repulsion for the other aspects. I was once told a story which was true. There was a rich man who had the image of Mother Kali installed in his home. The Goddess used to be worshipped with rich offerings every-day. One day a Vaishnava came and bowed before the image and said addressing it: 'Sister-in-law, how is my elder brother?' [Some Vaishnavas are so fanatical that they refuse to look upon Siva, the consort of Kali, as the Lord Himself and want to consider Him as only a devotee of Vishnu, and as such their spiritual elder brother.] The Master of the house understood the attitude of the Vaishnava. He welcomed him and gave him a seat, and in order to teach him a good lesson, called one of his men to his side and asked him to prepare a dish of pungent yam. The dish was accordingly prepared and brought to the Vaishnava. He did not know that it was yam and so pungent. He took one morsel and at once felt a burning sensation in his mouth. The host asked: 'Sir, why are you not taking any more?' 'Sir,' he replied, 'it is yam.' 'Sirrah, thy elder brother could swallow and digest potfuls of poison and thou canst not take one dish of yam? Hallo, who is there? Bring me a stick. I must break this rascal's head if he does not eat all the yam.' The Vaishnava was humbled to the dust. He prayed earnestly to be pardoned and promised never to speak

of Siva in that fashion again. The man was then feasted properly and sent away with solemn warning not to be so bigoted again.

"But if the *Nisthā* is true and devoid of the hatred of other Gods and Goddesses, it leads quickly to Divine realisations. The Master one day told us a story: There were two brothers. The younger was the devotee of Gopala, Child-Krishna, and the elder of Kali. Once a nice bunch of plantain grew in their garden and each of them thought that as soon as it would ripen, he would offer it to his Deity. In course of time the fruits ripened, but the younger brother was absent from home. Accordingly the elder brother plucked them and offered them to Kali. When the younger brother returned and learnt that the plantains had been offered to Kali, he got furious and went with a stick to the shrine of Kali to break Her image. But as soon as he entered the shrine, he found that there was no Kali but the image of Gopala installed on the throne! He was struck with a deep remorse. He thought he had mistakenly entered the shrine of Gopala. He came out and went into the other shrine with the stick

in hand. But lo, there also he found the image of Gopala! Then the truth dawned on him. He understood that He who was Gopala was also Kali.

"One who has realised God cannot be bigoted. Take the case of Vijay Krishna Goswami. He was a Brahmo, but afterwards gave up the Brahmo Samaj and practised *lapasyā* and dressed himself like a Vaishnava. One day he said humbly to Sri Ramakrishna: 'Sir, many want to receive initiation from me. Should I initiate them?' 'Why not?' the Master replied. 'You are a descendant of Advaita Prabhu, you are as such born as a Guru. You will, of course, initiate.' When Swamiji returned from America, Goswamiji sent for him. He himself could not come, for he was not doing well. When Swamiji went to his place, Goswamiji vacated his seat and asked him to sit thereon. When Swamiji remonstrated, he said: 'I know how he (Sri Ramakrishna) used to look upon you. How can we understand your proper worth?' Swamiji then sat down on Goswamiji's seat, and Goswamiji sat down below. The disciples of Goswamiji, however, began to cast displeased looks at them."

## POLITICO-ECONOMIC RECONSTRUCTION OF INDIA

BY A SEEKER OF TRUTH

"With us religion is the only ground along which we can move. . . . The Indian can understand even politics when it is given through religion; sociology must come through religion; everything must come through religion. For that is the theme; the rest are the variations in the national life-music."—*Sriami Vivekananda*.

### I

The political movement in India, in an organised manner, first began in 1885 when the Indian National Congress was established. The conviction that a nation must solve its own problem, in its own way, and by dint of its own power and initiative, was conspicuous by its absence for many years in the history of the Congress. The

then political leaders believed sincerely in the honesty and good government of the Britishers, and hence resorted to a mild method of political propaganda by sending memorandums to the Government of India. In the mean time, other great forces were acting on the national mind outside the sphere of the Congress. The literary and the cultural movements in India, and the recogni-



spiritual ideal, the social, political and economical requirements of the majority of the people were considered none the less important. Indian civilisation knew full well that a man advances from truth to truth, from a lower truth to a higher truth. So there must be a suitable politico-socio-economic structure which can satisfy the demands of all individuals constituting the body-politic. Only the secular institutions must not hinder our progress towards the spiritual ideal. They must be moulded in such a way as to smoothen our path to perfection. Ideals always create forms. The spiritual ideals of our civilisation spontaneously built their suitable forms in the politico-socio-economic structure of our society. It is a mistake to think that any political, social or economic systems can be suitable to the spiritual ideals. Systems create environments to fashion the mind in peculiar ways. They exert a tremendous influence upon the minds of men. So ancient India had no other alternative but to start some distinctive institutions that might serve her national purpose.

Some distinctive spiritual conceptions have been guiding Indian life and thought from the days of yore. Prophets and seers have been appearing to interpret the very same conceptions in different lights, according to the change of circumstances. The first postulate of Indian culture is the Divinity of man, that is to say, a man potentially possesses the fullest perfection in him, the perfect manifestation being only a question of time. The second is the theory of reincarnation, which declares that a man has been experiencing the world through numberless births and deaths. The present life is only an infinitesimal portion of the vast, eternal life that he has previously passed through and that he will have to experience subsequently. The third is the conception of Moksha or liberation. After the enjoyment of the sweets and bitters of lives, a satiety naturally comes in course of time. The serious blows

that fall upon man in course of experiencing worldly life, sooner or later reveal the naked realities in which a man moves and works. His mind now turns back; he seeks through knowledge and devotion his own Self which is Knowledge-Existence-Bliss absolute, and thus ultimately realises the ideal of Moksha. The fourth is the conception of Dharma, that is to say an ethical conduct through which a man is to enjoy life in accordance with his particular temperament, having an eye to the lives that are before him, and without any detriment to his latent spiritual nature. The conception of duty is diametrically opposed to that of right. Duty means self-abnegation—the surrender of one's individual interests to those of others. Right presupposes an aggressiveness—what one has to snatch away from others. It makes man very impatient. Owing to its supremacy in the West, there have been incessant struggles between classes and classes, and nations and nations. To die in harness is the ideal before the noisy civilisation of the West. The conception of duty makes a man calm, patient and self-possessed in the midst of the din and bustle of life.

These ideals have played their parts well in the Indian scheme of life. In society, there were four main groupings—the Brahmin, the Kshatriya, the Vaisva and the Sudra, having Brahminhood, *i.e.*, a state of spiritual enlightenment, as their common goal of life. In the Rig Vedic period, all people within the Vedic fold were culturally Brahmins, while occupationally quite different. Thus we find that a Brahmin father had sons, adhering to the spiritual culture of the family but following different vocations. In all the great epochs of the history of our country, the caste system was very flexible, as we find in the various references of Manu, Apastamba and others. A lower caste could attain to Brahminhood, through culture and learning. Only in the normal condition of society, the community as a whole and not the individual was the

unit. Hindu altruism taught a genius, belonging to a low caste, not to forsake his community but to share his greatness with all its members. The rigid division of castes according to Sattva, Rajas and Tamas commenced as the Vedic society became larger and larger by admitting numberless races of India into its fold. With the cultural conquest of Non-Aryan sects, an aristocratic tendency began to prevail among those who were Aryan *par excellence*. Consequently an elaborate system of rituals grew and priest-craft got the upper-hand in society. The Vedic scheme which allowed a Brahmin to remain highly spiritual, and at the same time follow any occupation according to the need of his society and family, steadily declined, and a fictitious difference was created between culture and calling. The spiritual and intellectual culture of the race became the monopoly of a group, while manual labour, industries and agriculture were handed over to the newly converted Non-Aryans. Thus the schism between culture and occupation was complete. The Vedic ideal was not, however, totally forgotten. The message of Karma Yoga, teaching that no work is mean and that perfection can be attained by following any calling with a spiritual motive, was declared time and again by reformers among whom Sri Krishna stands supreme. Buddha came and democratised the truths of Vedanta, in their pristine purity, for the uplift of the lower castes. Ramanuja, Kabir, Chaitanya and others preached the gospel of social uplift to the masses. Thus, though there has been a tug-of-war between the ideal and the real, the Brahminisation of all individuals, irrespective of their avocations, has ever remained the distinctive feature of the social, political and economical institutions of our civilisation and culture.

Hindu polity had a purpose, both secular and spiritual. From the secular standpoint politics was required for preserving the rights and privileges of the people, and for equalising the in-

terests and enjoyments of all, as far as possible. It was meant for the internal and external defence of the country and for keeping up the flow of traditional culture intact in society. From the spiritual standpoint the entire political system had to be organised in such a manner that people might pursue spirituality with the least difficulty, while undertaking various political functions. Thus a new conception of work naturally developed in ancient India. Work was deemed sacred and was a means to inner perfection: it was transformed into worship. Work, viewed in a spiritual perspective and done with a spiritual motive, is Karma Yoga, which is the cardinal doctrine of the Gita. Karma Yoga demands that work must be heartily loved, and no work can be loved unless all the pros and cons regarding the work are well-known to the doer, unless all details of work are intertwined with the motives and sentiments of the doer. Thus any unnecessary centralisation which makes people mere machines in the hands of a few 'wire-pullers' had to be removed from the politico-socio-economic structure of India. One of the characteristic features of Hindu polity was a system of thorough decentralisation even in the midst of the most powerful monarchies in ancient India. Specially in the secular life, decentralisation made the people highly democratic, for real democracy demands that all possible local affairs must be undertaken by the local people themselves on their own initiative, without delegating powers to the state. Thus the conception of Prajā-dharma, with a distinct scheme of life, mostly independent of the centralised state, developed and grew in India. Yet, the necessity of a centralised state was never deemed quite unnecessary. Various forms of state, monarchy, oligarchy and republic, flourished in ancient India, and their function was to observe Rājadharmā, i.e., the duty of defending the country internally and externally, and of preserving the sameness of affairs throughout a given territory. In this

way, Prajādharmā for efficient local government and Rājadharmā for powerful central government grew side by side under the same spiritual scheme of life. In ancient times the central government of the country was crushed time and again, but the local government came down in a flourishing condition, till at last during the East India Company's régime it received a very serious economic set-back and gradually sank into oblivion. The constitutions of Paura, Jānapada, Sreni, Gana, etc. displayed a highly developed self-governing capacity of our people. Republics are mentioned in the Vedas and the Buddhist literature. There are numismatic evidences of some prominent republics. The defect of our ancient system was that the central government was not always a natural development of the local government. A wide chasm separated the two in feelings and interests, and an all-India state on a federal basis could not be constituted with the help of the representatives, hailing from various local institutions.

The division of the Vaisya and the Sudra communities into numberless subcastes was a great achievement, so far as the economic structure of society was concerned. Though in Kautilya's Arthashāstra, royal villages and special state-industries are mentioned, still land generally belonged to the people at large, and the economic requirements were abundantly supplied by the well-organised caste-guilds and the banker-guilds. Traders and trade-routes were not wanting to carry commodities to every nook and corner of India, nay, to the distant places all over the civilised world. The causes that brought about decentralisation in state-affairs, did the same in the economic sphere. Indian craftsmen wonderfully combined religion, art and utility in their industrial avocations. Before commencing their daily work, they would worship Viswakarman, the maker of the universe, and meditate deeply on fresher motifs and designs. Each workman was familiar with the entire process of manufactur-

ing an article, and the drudgery of modern Western industrialism in producing 'the eighteenth part of a needle' was unknown to him. Socially, each guild developed its peculiar manners and customs; politically, each had its Panchāyat to look after local affairs; economically, each trained its members from their very childhood in its own specialised industry; and spiritually,—as we read in some rare inscriptions—the members of a guild sometimes studied the Vedas and lived a Brahmin-like life. The wandering monks at the crossings of roads and in village temples were a source of inspiration to the peasants and the artisans. The craftsmen, enjoying tranquillity and freedom, could display charming designs in industries. The stories from the Rāmāyana, the Mahābhārata and the Purāṇas were illustrated in the textile productions. The feelings and sentiments of a craftsman were mingled with every detail of his production, and work was really worship to him. The peasants, while going to plough, would sing, "(O my mind, thou hast ploughed enough of land, now plough your own life which lies barren." The folk-songs of the various subcastes were the outpouring of a noble emotion and expressed an inner longing for spiritual vision. It is a half-truth that geniuses were crushed in our ancient industrialism. It is generally remarked that a genius does not find scope for self-expression where there is no competition, and that life becomes stagnant in a system organised too rigidly upon co-operative basis. But the fact is that a genius had an ample scope for self-manifestation by way of discovering fresher designs; only he could not exploit his fellow-men by means of his keener intellect. Moreover, the highest ideal being the realisation of God by following Karma Yoga, geniuses naturally betook themselves to spiritual pursuits and became the teachers of society. Had there been no spiritual ideal, there might be disturbance in society owing to the dissatisfaction of

men, possessing exceptional talents. But talents were directed in a spiritual channel. As a result, we come across Dharmavyadha, a philosopher, in a butcher community, Tuladhara, a seer of truths, in a Vaisya community, Nanak, Kavir and others. Through generations, the guild-system had been coming down unhampered till at last it was crushed during the days of the East India Company. The drawback of the Indian guild-system consisted not in lack of scientific knowledge, but in lack of all-India organisation on a federal basis. Simply for want of organisation, the guilds could not stand firm and bring desirable pressure upon the middlemen, the Zemindars, the Rajahs and other designing men who became tools in the hands of the foreigners for destroying the highly developed industries of the country.

### III

Clear thoughts and conceptions are the *sine qua non* of successful achievements. Before embarking upon various activities, we essentially require a sound philosophy of life. The history of all great movements shows that a sound philosophy is at first conceived by a few thinkers and then preached to all through propaganda and education. It is only when the proper ground has been prepared that attempts are made to introduce the particular scheme of life, based upon that philosophy. This is the history of the French Revolution, the national movements in Italy, Germany and Ireland, and the awakening of Japan. This is the history of the Proletariat Revolution in Russia. It is to be regretted that we Indians lack such a philosophy as the basis of our national activities. A philosophy of life can be best suited to a people, when it is linked with the past culture of that people, when it can synthesise all the various thought-forces at play at the present time, and lastly when it can stir up the imagination of the people by painting a luminous future, furnished with all the noble elements,

discovered in course of the progress of human history. The railway, the steamship, the airship, the telegraph, the radio-broadcasting, etc. have knit together the whole world. What we think to-day becomes universal to-morrow. No nation can live an isolated life now. So the best thoughts of humanity, that have fortunately penetrated into our country, must be fully utilised by us.

We have seen the past traditions of India. Let us now turn to the creative thoughts of modern times. Nationalism, Industrialism, Socialism and Anarchist Communism represent the various currents of thoughts, simultaneously playing their roles in the soil of Europe. And trained as we are on Western lines and models, all these have come to stay with us. Nationalism has organised the people of Europe into distinct political groups, and the avowed object of each group is purely material enjoyment of life or Bhoga. Nationalism has very naturally culminated in Economic Imperialism, owing to the land-grabbing proclivities of Western nations. Science and Christianity have become the hand-maidens of this Imperialism, the one for bullying the weaker nations, and the other for denationalising them and establishing a fictitious cultural superiority for the West. Industrialism has become the chief agent of Western Nationalism and Imperialism to suck the very life-blood of races economically disorganised. But Industrialism has not spared even the Western world. Bernard Shaw says that nine-tenths of what England takes away by exploiting other peoples, are enjoyed only by one-tenth of her population. This is a horrible misdistribution of wealth in a country. This is the case with other European nations as well. As a result of this accumulation of capital in fewer hands, Socialism, Syndicalism, Guild-socialism and Anarchist Communism have risen in Europe. Some want State-capitalism in lieu of individual capitalism, that is to say, nationalisation of land, railways, mines, etc.

Some seek to expropriate the capitalist class from their vested interests, and make the labourers the supreme authority in an Industrial Democracy. There is another extreme school, represented by Bakunin, Tolstoy, Kropotkin and others, which wants the abolishment of 'states' altogether, and desires to leave the people alone to organise themselves into free associations on their own initiative. The economic interpretation of history which Socialism preaches is important in the sense that it makes a new attempt to study human institutions in the light of the actions and reactions of economic interests. It opens up a new vista of research for the various institutions of India. Though there is a great deal of truth in this doctrine, still it is partial, because it ignores other creative social forces which are cultural and spiritual in nature. Nationalism is well and good, if it can get rid of economic imperialism with its blood-thirst, if it can allow natural groupings of mankind for cultural and politico-economic self-determination. If nationalism means co-ordination of wills for a definite purpose, then there is ample scope for India to assimilate all the methods of Western nationalism, provided she clings to her spiritual purpose and its corresponding collective life. Industrialism can occupy its rightful place in the future society, if it does not crush millions of powerless people under its heels, demoralising them, and blunting their finer susceptibilities, if it does not presuppose the exploitation of the millions of helpless people all over the world. Keeping intact her economically efficient cottage-industries which can stand the tests of modern times, India can assimilate even Western industrialism to a certain extent, provided she can broaden her outlook in the light of an aggressive spirituality. But industrialism with large-scale production must have a limited, too limited scope in Indian life for the best interests of India and humanity. Socialism can really succeed if there be a spiritual

change in the outlook of man and if, as H. G. Wells suggests, it can (1) prepare the individual mind by means of proper education, (2) make truthful presentation of public affairs to the generality of people for their judgment and approval, (3) select real representatives and the faithful executive, and (4) afford scope for free-thought and research. We cannot definitely say now what great changes the doctrines of the Vedanta—such as the Divinity of man, solidarity of humanity, oneness of the whole creation, etc.—will bring in the human society. But it seems that the Vedanta in its practical aspect will bring about a root and branch reform by removing all sorts of privileges and changing the laws relating to inheritance, rent, wages, etc. Socialism is still waiting for a spiritual basis, and most probably that basis is Vedanta. Thus we find that a great responsibility weighs upon India,—a responsibility to spiritualise one of the great creative forces of the modern world.

#### IV

Modern India at the parting of her ways can ill afford to ignore these thought-forces that have come from the West. In interpreting her philosophy of life, the basis of her politico-economic structure, she must assimilate the best elements of the West without any prejudice. But India must remain India. There is a distinctive tone of the Indian collective life and this tone must be preserved in spite of the various transformations of society. A cultural movement has been progressing for some decades in our country. Though apparently very feeble, it is fraught with immense possibilities. The various institutions, religious, artistic and otherwise, cannot be ignored. They represent the self-expression of India's glorious past. The time has come when Indian spirituality, Indian polity, Indian sociology, Indian economics, Indian art, etc. must be systematised and reinterpreted in the light of Western civilisation.

tion and culture. The East and the West are to be happily blended together, but the racial characteristics of India must not be staked.

It is for this reason that the builders of our society must emphasise the spiritual foundation at the very start. To our Westernised mentality, the very name of spirituality is shocking. Some politicians look upon spirituality as an appendage of the nineteenth century nationalism. In Czarist Russia, the Christian missionaries, who were tools in the hands of the then Government, helped the process of exploitation, undertaken by the state, by repeating certain passages of the Bible to the Russian masses. We find before our very eyes how in the name of a so-called religion, millions of Indians are looked down upon as untouchables, as drawers of water and hewers of wood. Naturally the head of a young patriot reels, and he repeats the dictum of Karl Mark, 'Religion is the opium of the people.' But spirituality which is to be the basis of our politico-economic structure, can never be a priest-ridden religion. It teaches some universal truths pertaining to human life and destiny, and gives some constructive suggestions as to how these truths are to be worked out in the entire life of the nation. There will be very few people indeed to realise these truths in their completeness at the very outset. But if the people be convinced of their final utility, and prevailed upon to give an intellectual assent to these truths, it will be sufficient at present for launching upon constructive activities on a spiritual line. For stirring up our national imagination and vitalising our national life, Indian spirituality, in its aggressive aspect, gives us the following constructive ideas:

(1) Each man is potentially divine. It is a sin to call a man sinner. There is infinite power, sleeping in man. One must have adamant faith in one's mighty self, and be convinced of one's inherent strength. Let us manifest this power physically, and we shall be physi-

cally great. Let us manifest it intellectually, and we shall be world-movers. Let us express it spiritually, and we shall be seers. This is the simple message of Vedanta. We are to look upon men in a new perspective. We are not to seek God in the sky but see Him in men, and behave with them as such. Such a change of outlook is destined to bring about marvellous transformations in society, law, education, criminology and the like.

(2) Essentially speaking, there is no matter; everything is Spirit. Spiritual India has discovered numberless concrete symbols for attaining to this Spirit-consciousness. To the Hindu, the mountains, the rivers and the sacred cities of India symbolise the distinctive spiritual ideals of our scriptures. We are to realise the all-pervading Spirit in 'India.' India is no more to be a mere geographical expression. It is the symbol of the Virât. "For the next fifty years, this alone shall be our keynote, this, our great Mother India. Let all our vain gods disappear for a time from our minds. This is the only God that is awake, our own race, everywhere His hands, everywhere His feet, everywhere His ears, He covers everything."

(3) Each man is responsible for what he is now and what he will become in future. He is unconscious of his immortal nature, and hence experiencing happiness and sorrow, and life and death in the world. It is due to his own Karma that a man is bound to the cycles of birth and death. This is the doctrine of Janmântara or reincarnation. It makes man calm, patient and dignified in the midst of dire calamities, and tends to keep him in the legitimate bounds of a moral order. There will be no reincarnation when the Self is realised.

(4) How to realise the Self? How to get rid of the sorrows and sufferings of the world? Not by denying work, but by fulfilling work. Work should not be shunned. Work, be that political, be that economic, be that social, or be

that otherwise, is to be transformed into worship. Work becomes worship when the worker acts in the spirit of Jñāna or Bhakti or perfect unselfishness and love for mankind. This is Karma Yoga which can render immense good both subjectively and objectively. Subjectively, the doer purifies himself by

means of unselfish work and ultimately realises the Truth. Objectively, the whole society is benefited, since all kinds of work become sanctified and the doer performs everything in a worshipful spirit. Karma Yoga can spiritualise the proper politico-economic structure essential for New India.

(To be continued.)

## A SERAPHIC SOUL

BY SWAMI NITYASWARUPANANDA

It was Sunday, the 5th March, 1916, the day of the annual meeting of the Ramakrishna Mission. Many lay members came to the Math on that occasion. Towards the end of the meeting, Baburam Maharaj addressed the members as follows:

"An elephant has two sets of tusks, one outside and the other inside with which it eats. The missionary work that we do is like the external tusks of an elephant. Whatever you might do, whether you establish a home of service or do relief work, nothing will avail if you have no character. Character, purity and one-pointed devotion—these are what we want. If you have these, you will attain something, otherwise nothing. (*Addressing the lay members*) Being only members of the Mission will not do. You must mould your own characters. You must make the world your own through love. Let the people learn from your selflessness, self-abnegation and purity. You must drive away egoism and pride from your mind, look upon yourselves as the servants of God and thus serve others.

"As the Master would not like to have name and fame, so his name and fame are ringing all around. Swamiji (Swami Vivekananda) used to say in later years, 'Oh, I have got a great hatred for name and fame.' Be you all of character and transformed into gods. Then indeed the work of the Mission

will prosper truly. 'This is my heart's prayer to you all.'

In the evening of the same day, after supper, Baburam Maharaj was seated on the long large bench in the verandah. Some *Sādhus* and householder devotees were present before him. He said:

"In the world the mind is scattered on wife, son, family and lust of gold. It is the function of ignorance not to allow the mind to be concentrated. But we have to concentrate the mind, and that is *Sādhana*. The mind cannot be absorbed in God, if there is the least speck of desire in any corner of it. Along with meditation and *japa*, you must have keen discrimination. You must search out the lurking desires from the remotest corners of the mind and drive them away. This is what is meant by the saying, 'A man should uplift himself by his own self.' This is how the mind should be conquered. The mind once conquered, one becomes self-contented. Such a one is a *Muni*. It will not do if you only make *japa* or practise *prāṇāyāma*, but do not at the same time try to drive away the innumerable desires that are in the mind, and only hide them covering them with flowers."

His conversations were not restricted to spiritual matters alone. They covered a wide range of subjects. His words threw a flood of light also on social, national and other problems.

The Swami had the welfare of the women greatly at heart. He knew that the society could not fully develop until the women were educated. He, therefore, took great care to inspire them with the high ideals of the Master and Swami Vivekananda, so that they might be pure, selfless and devoted to God. He tried all possible means to achieve it, and when away, he inspired them through correspondence. As an example we give below the translation of one of his letters to a Bengali lady:

"Dear Mother, . . . I thank you again and again in that you think of the Sister Nivedita. Let thousands of Niveditas come out of Bengal—was the desire of Swamiji. Let there again arise numbers of Gargi, Lilavati, Sita and Savitri in this country. Through purity, devotion and sincerity man becomes God. May the Master graciously inspire you with divine ideals—this is my prayer. Swamiji used to say, 'Men cannot train boys as well as mothers can.' Take three or four children according to your capacity and begin to train them. Rules and regulations will grow of themselves. If you have ideas within, you will not require them so much. Believe, believe that strength and capacity, everything is in you. Think of the Master and Swamiji and set to educate. Open an elementary school. The Master himself will send help. To give away is the primal virtue in this iron age. What better thing is there in this world than learning? Give knowledge, and ignorance will vanish through its culture. Read *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* everyday with minute attention. And you will find how much of the *Gītā* and the *Bhāgavata* is contained in a single word of it. Read the epistles and lectures of Swamiji, and you will find infinite inspiration in them. A new era has dawned with the appearance of the Master. Don't let this opportunity go. Let the people find the beautiful

path will attain bliss. We must create a sect comprising the whole world. Let none be excluded from it. Let there be none in the world, whom we cannot call our own. If there be any such, it is 'I' and 'mine'; and these 'I' and 'mine' are great enemies. We must destroy and put an end to these great enemies. It is only then that the whole world will be our own and of God and filled with bliss and peace. He alone will be able to give this education—he who has made away with this 'I' and 'mine'. Faith in the name of God will destroy this ignorance, this illusion. Through the power of God everything is achieved. May the grace of God remove the covering from our eyes! . . ."

He looked upon women as the embodiments of Divine Power and showed uncommon respect towards them. Whenever the women devotees came to him, he stood up and would not take his seat until they were seated.

Being the very picture of love, Baburam Maharaj exercised a tremendous influence on the minds of the youths. Attracted by his magnetic love, they used to visit him very often, and he made them his own. Of all people the youths had the greatest share of his love and kindness. He believed that the youths were fittest to imbibe high thoughts and ideals and most capable of realising them in life. He used to say: "We do not care for the big people. We want to make disciples of the young men. We want the stoutest, strongest and most intelligent youths who will give themselves to the propagation of the holy gospel of the Master throughout the world." With this view he set before the young men the lofty ideals of the Master and Swamiji and infused into them a spirit which brought about a gradual change in their life. During vacations of schools and colleges, young men from various places used to come and stay at the Math. Baburam Maharaj treated them most



instructive letters to those who came in close touch with him. And thus attracted and influenced by him, many a youth took up God-realisation as the highest and noblest ideal of his life and renounced the world and joined the Ramakrishna Order. We know a good number of the monks of our Order to-day, who gratefully remember Baburam Maharaj as the decisive influence in their life. To him they owe a debt which they cannot hope to repay.

## VI

The management of the Math and the training of the young *Brahmachārins* and monks occupied Baburam Maharaj's most careful and loving attention above all other things. He looked after the management of the Math to the minutest details. Worship of the Master, management of the kitchen, taking care of the vegetable garden and the orchard, feeding the cows, and all such things he himself performed with the most scrupulous care and taught the young *Brahmachārins* and *Sauntyāsins* to do properly. In all such matters the procedure that was followed by Baburam Maharaj is still largely followed in the Math. He often said that one must be ready to give away one's own head (*shir*) in order to become a leader (*sardār*). And the truth of this saying he perfectly exemplified in his own life. Whatever he asked the young *Sādhus* to do he first showed by his own example. He perfectly knew that one must have infinite patience and forgiveness to be at the helm of affairs of such a big organisation, as he had to deal with many diverse elements and temperaments. With a spirit of wonderful patience, endurance and forgiveness, he conducted the affairs of the Math. One day he described to a senior monk of the Order how he proceeded with his work everyday. He said: "After finishing my meditation and *japa* when I come

again and again the *mantram* of the Master,—'Endure, endure, endure (*sha, sa, sa*) ; one who endures, abides, and one who does not, is destroyed.' " Indeed he was endurance personified. He had not the least tinge of pride in him. That the Master was doing everything and that he was a mere instrument in his hands was fully realised by him. He saw God in everything and therefore found no evil anywhere. He took a lesson for himself whenever he found any *Sādhū* doing wrong. He writes in several letters:

"This is a lesson I have learnt at the Math. When the boys do any wrong, I reason and find that they are not at fault. Whatever fault there is, is mine."

"I do not harbour the idea that I am good. I have come to learn. There is no end to learning. May the Master give us right understanding—this is my prayer."

"By observing the faults of others we are gradually infected by them. We have not come to look at the faults of or correct others. But it is only to learn that we are here. We must always test ourselves by how much we have learnt. . . What can you do in this dreadful furnace of the world? Love, if you can, and you will get bliss and peace."

"Lord, Thou art everything. Whom should I scold? Everything is He ; there is only a difference in the quantity of dust that covers the gold."

"Friend, I am to learn as long as I am to live"—this is a lesson he learnt from the Master and acted up to it throughout his life and taught others to do the same.

In spite of this humble spirit, he was never careless to train the young *Sādhus* in the best possible way, or loath to assume a stern attitude when necessary. He played the role of a loving yet stern mother in moulding their lives. If any one failed to do and move according to his directions, he did not let him alone. He tried

right course. If he failed in that, he did not mind using even force in order to correct him. But the stream of love and kindness that flowed for him in his heart could not be checked, and would on such occasions burst forth only more forcibly. Like a loving mother he would repent and try to make up for his stern behaviour by offering him the best of things to eat. During his last illness when he was at Deoghar, a devotee used to bring the best available things for the Swami's attendants to eat. One day Baburam Maharaj scolded one of them for eating such things, saying: "The Master used to say that a *Sādhu* must restrain his greed and lust and take only half meals at night. Being a *Sādhu* you are doing quite the opposite and eating things out of greed!" The attendant felt wounded at the rebuke and left the place without letting any one know. At the time of the mid-day meal Baburam Maharaj became anxious at not seeing him. He felt that the young monk had taken his rebuke to heart and gone away. He sent out his other attendants to find him out. But they failed. He was sitting in a sad mood in the afternoon when the monk entered the room by a back door. When Baburam Maharaj came to know of it, he called him to his side and said: "My boy, I am old and weakened by illness. I cannot always keep my temper. Should you get angry with me if I happen to say anything in this my condition?" As he said this, tears filled his eyes. And he brought some sweets and fed him with his own hands.

Sometimes he explained his attitude in order to console the chastised. One day repenting his harsh treatment of a senior *Sannyāsin* he said: "Did you mind my scolding this afternoon? Well, from your example the new *Brahmachārins* will learn everything. You should be ideals. . . . A *Sādhu* should keep everything neat and clean. The Master could not bear to see anything unclean. (*Pointing to the Brahma-*

*chārins present*) They will have to learn everything. In cooking, cutting vegetables, working in the Shrine, worshipping, keeping accounts, lecturing and in everything else, they will have to be experts. It is for their good that I scold them so much and have all such things carefully done by them. I have not the least anger towards any one. (*To the Brahmachārins*) Please don't mind that I scold you." Inspired by pure love as it was, Baburam Maharaj's scolding had no sting in it.

The young *Brahmachārins* and *Sannyāsins* were taught by him how to do even a most ordinary thing perfectly. He insisted on their maintaining good manners and gentle behaviour towards others. "First become gentle if you want to be *Sādhu*,"—this is what he impressed upon them deeply. He asked them all to look upon the Math as a place of training above all and sometimes regretted saying: "Nowadays none like to learn social and common good manners and gentle behaviour. The Master used to take extreme care to teach us these things."

Baburam Maharaj tried for an all-round development of the young *Sādhus*. In order to inspire them with the noblest and highest ideals, he often spoke to them of Sri Ramakrishna's intense renunciation, keen thirst for God-realisation, unheard-of devotion to truth, strenuous *Sādhana* for twelve long years, extraordinary realisations and uncommon love and kindness for his disciples. And he always set before them the life of Swami Vivekananda who, along with the highest realisations of the Self, reached the pink of perfection in the graces of the head and heart and exemplified in his life perfect *Brahmacharya*, indefatigable activity, extreme purity and wonderful selfless love for humanity. He became inspired when he spoke to them of the Master and Swamiji. One day he held before the *Sādhus* the ideal of purity as the essence of all spiritual practices and impressed the idea thus:

"No one so pure as the Master has as yet been born on earth. He could not touch any impure person. If any such ever touched him, he would cry out in pain. Purity is religion, purity is strength. He was the embodiment of purity. Place him as the ideal before you and get your minds purified. Whenever lust and greed of gold enter into your minds, at once remember the Master and Swamiji and drive away those impure propensities. Have the guard of knowledge keeping watch at the door of your mind, and take care that no impure thought ever crosses its threshold. Get your life moulded in this fashion, and you will see what immense strength wakes up in you. 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.' "

Another day while saying that religion is not a matter of words but of realisation, he said:

"Many are lecturing on religion and writing books on it ; but how many are accepting it? Can you expect any one to accept it until it penetrates into his very heart? Show by life, and people will listen to you. I want life, —life aflame with fire. Let your mouths be closed and actions speak. Stop speaking but show in action whose sons you are. You are the sons of the Divine Mother,—the sons of the Master and Swamiji. May you spit upon earthly name and fame! Never care whether people speak well or ill of you. Purify your heart and soul, install the Mother and the Master there, make yourself Their instrument and calmly work on, being one in mind and speech. This (the Math) is not a place to bustle in, but was founded by Swamiji to make real men. Man is not made by mere book-learning without religion and character. Those who will finish their education here, will be ideal persons of character."

Indeed his last-mentioned claim was quite justifiable. He was a maker of man in the true sense of the term. He was a touchstone. Whomsoever he touched had to be turned into gold.

And there are many who were made into gold by him, and who have consecrated their life as an offering to truth, love and service to humanity.

But none of them did he make his disciples. Swamiji had once said to him, "Well, Baburam, don't make disciples. If you do, your disciples and Rakhal's will quarrel with one another in future." Baburam Maharaj acted up to this advice of Swamiji to the end of his days. Though he himself did not initiate anybody, yet his eagerness to help others in the path of God was unique. Whenever he got an opportunity, he tried to infuse power into others and thereby awaken their spirituality. His behaviour clearly evinced that he felt a restlessness as to how to lead men Godward. This trait was very prominent in him. This peculiarity of his character expressed itself in many ways in his dealings with others. Apart from his own help, he sent and often took those who pressed him for initiation to Holy Mother or to Swami Brahmananda and had them initiated by them.

Baburam Maharaj tried his best to observe the rules that had been laid down by Swamiji for the conduct of the Math. Swamiji very much desired that there should be regular studies of the Sanskrit scriptures in the Math. Baburam Maharaj was, therefore, particular about this all his life. And as a result a regular study circle has been formed under the guidance of a learned Sanskrit Pandit. He took keen interest in and encouraged also the study of Western philosophy and similar subjects in the Math. He also took special interest in the spread of general education among the masses. Whenever any one undertook such a work, he inspired and encouraged him. Once he wrote to one:

"Swamiji also desired the imparting of education. It is a very good idea. Only *Sevdshrama* and *Sevdshrama*! That has become a hobby. Why, is there nothing new to do? Even on his last day, Swamiji spoke to me of

spreading knowledge. It is quite certain that this will do immense good to you as well as to the country. Seeing your ideal life, the boys will acquire a new life. Be you the torch-bearers in the path of spreading knowledge. The cultivation of knowledge in the company of the *Sādhus* will impart a new appearance to the country, and the boys will have their life's aim correctly determined. It is only by so doing that the boys will become men,—nay, they will become *Rishis* and gods.

"I have already heard of your school from H. Do as much as you can in the direction of founding schools, spreading education and imparting knowledge. This was Swami Vivekananda's heart's desire. Those fortunate persons who will help in this cause are gods in the forms of men. They indeed are selfless workers, and blessed indeed are their lives. What will one school or three or four *Sevāshramas* avail? Have faith in the name of the Master and through God's grace establish schools and *Sevāshramas* in every town, village and hamlet."

One of his most prominent characteristics was his utter disregard for his personal comfort. When he would sit down to eat, he would take the best things from his plate and distribute them to the junior members. As to his dress he would never keep more than the minimum supply. During his illness at Deoghar a devotee gave to his attendant four shirts for his use. When he came to know of it, he scolded the attendant and said, "I have never been accustomed to keeping so many shirts. Besides, it does not become a monk to have so much clothing." When he passed away, nothing but an empty canvass bag and a few books could be found to be preserved in honour of his memory!

## VII

Thus lived the Swami all the years since the charge of the Math was given to him after the passing of Swami Vivekananda. The inexhaustible energy

and power that were manifested through him kept him constantly occupied in training and moulding the character of those that had gathered round the name of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, by his living example as well as by his soul-stirring spiritual instructions. He silently lived an unostentatious life in the Math, sometimes playing the part of a spiritual teacher, sometimes that of a loving mother and sometimes even that of a schoolmaster. Man-making was his ideal. His relation with those who came to visit the Math was of the sweetest character. His all-embracing love for each and everybody was truly divine. To the visitors he was the personification of humility. He was verily like a cloud in the rainy season, silently flooding all with the refreshing waters of his love. For about six years he had been exclusively occupied with the management of the Math. In 1911 he set out on a pilgrimage to Amarnath in company with Swamis Shivananda and Turiyananda. After his return he turned his attention to the spreading of the universal message of the Master in the different parts of the country. East Bengal was particularly fortunate in sharing his love and service in this respect. He visited many places of that province several times and evoked great enthusiasm wherever he went. In 1917 he made his last tour in those parts. Being invited by some devotees on the occasion of a festival, he visited Gharinda, a village in the district of Mymensingh. All, Hindus and Mahommedans alike, were attracted by his loving and lovable personality. It was there that one day a Mahommedan, hearing him speak of the one God that existed in all, asked him if he could partake of the food touched by him. "Yes, I can," was the Swami's reply. Immediately some food was brought in a plate and he unhesitatingly partook of the food from the hands of the Mahommedan. From Gharinda he went to Netrakona. On his way from there to Mymensingh, there was a touching incident. The

Swami's party had gone ahead and he was proceeding in a palanquin. He had not gone far from Netrakona when some villagers saw him and stopped his palanquin and did not let him go till all others of their village had seen and been blessed by him and made an offering of some green fruits to him.

From Mymensingh he came to Dacca where he stopped for some days. From Dacca he visited Narayanganj and some interior villages such as Hashara and Sonargaon. At all these places there was tremendous enthusiasm and attraction towards him. One day at Hashara he found that water-hyacinth had filled a pond and was polluting its water. He asked the young men to be up and doing to remove this pest and himself proceeded to clear the pond. Inspired by his example the young men at once cleared the whole pond. They did not stop there. They organised a party and carried on this work of removing water-hyacinths in several villages of Vikramপুর, which had been a standing nuisance for several years.

Travelling thus for two or three months in towns and villages, quite regardless of his personal conveniences and always mindful of the good of others, Baburam Maharaj came back to the Math with fever. The doctors examined him and declared it to be a case of kala-azar. He was advised a change of climate and sent to Deoghar. After suffering from this disease for one long year and a half, when he was on the point of recovery, he suddenly fell a victim to influenza which made its appearance at Deoghar at that time after creating a havoc in several parts of Bengal. On medical advice, he was brought to Calcutta to the house of Balaram Bose. The best physicians saw him but could not give any hope of recovery. And in the afternoon of Tuesday, July 30, 1918, the fourth day of his arrival in Calcutta, he entered into *Mahāsamādhi* in the presence of his brother disciples and monks and *Brahmachārins*. His body was brought to and cremated at the Belur Math.

## VIII

Notwithstanding his extreme and long suffering which reduced his body to a mere skeleton, he was never found to be disturbed in the mind. As in health, so also in illness, he would ever say, "The grace of the Master is the only support," and the name of Sri Ramakrishna was ever on his lips. Sri Ramakrishna used to say that a class of men were born on this earth who were indifferent to all earthly enjoyments and name and fame, always engaging themselves in the service of men showing them the path to God. On account of the special manifestation of God in them, he classed them as *Iswara-kotis* and often declared Baburam Maharaj as belonging to this class. It is not for us to fathom the depths of spirituality to which he attained. Only a jeweller knows the worth of a diamond. Sri Ramakrishna spoke of him as a jewel-casket. But does that give us any real glimpse into his inner being? He himself would never like to speak of his realisations but we shall mention here one or two significant incidents. One day after the evening service, Baburam Maharaj sat down for meditation in a corner of the southern verandah of the Shrine. The usual period of time expired but he did not get up. The attendant at the Shrine, when he came to offer the *bhoga* (food to the deity), found him sitting still with his body a little tilted backwards. He thought the Swami had fallen asleep through physical exhaustion. He called him repeatedly but did not get any reply. He returned to his service at the Shrine, and after some time again went to Baburam Maharaj. He was as before sitting still. He called and called him,—there was no response. He then placed a light before his eyes for some time. Baburam Maharaj opened his eyes by and by. The *Brahmachārin* asked him if he had fallen asleep, on which he began to sing sweetly :

"I am awakened and will sleep no more. I am ever awake in the state of

Yoga. Oh Mother, I have given back Thy mystic sleep to Thee and have put sleep to sleep."

He then said to the *Brahmachârin*: "When you see me in that condition, do not call me or cry aloud but repeat the name of the Master in my ears." Another day while Baburam Maharaj was strolling about in the premises of the Math, Sri Ramakrishna suddenly appeared before him and lovingly said holding him by the cheeks: "Dear moon (a term of endearment), where will you run away? You are held in the nose by a rope in my hands." Babu-

ram Maharaj did not explain to us the implications of the Master's words; but it may be supposed that he had decided to leave this world even before the fulfilment of the trust vested in him by the Master, and that the Master had reminded him that the end of the rope tying him was in his hand and he would not leave it until he fulfilled his portion of the work. After years of loving service to humanity and thus fulfilling the trust of the Master, he was at last called to his blessed fect to repose in Peace and Bliss eternal.

(Concluded)

## RAMAKRISHNA AND THE KING-SHEPHERDS OF INDIA\*

BY ROMAIN ROLLAND

Such then were the great shepherds of the people, the king-pastors of India, at the moment when the star of Ramakrishna appeared in cloudless glory above the mountains.<sup>1</sup>

Naturally he could not know the first of these four men, the forerunner, Ram Mohun Roy, but he knew the other three personally. He first visited them, urged by that overwhelming thirst for God, which made him always ask himself—Are there no more of His wells, which these have found and from which

I have not drunk? But his practised eye judged them at sight. As he leant over them to taste them with thirsty devotion, he often laughed mischievously, and rose saying that his own were better. He was not the man to be dazzled by outward show, glory or eloquence. His veiled eyes did not blink unless the light he sought, the face of God Himself, shone out from the depths. They could penetrate through the walls of the body as through a window-pane and searched the very heart with eager

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<sup>1</sup> I have only mentioned the greatest. There were many others. India has never lacked messengers of God, founders of sects or religions, and they were continually appearing throughout the period. In the recent treatise by Helmuth von Glasenapp: *Religiöse Reform-bewegungen in heutigen Indien* (1928, Leipzig, J. C. Hinrich (?), Morgenland collection), there is an account of the two most curious.—The Atheistic Church of the Superman, the Dev-Samāj, and the Mystical Church of the Divine Sound (or Word), the Râdhâsvâmi-Satsang. They are not included here because they belong to

founded in 1887 by Shiva Narayana Agnihotra only adopted the name "superhuman" atheism after 1894; and its violent struggle against God, fought in the name of reason, morality and science, by a "superman," the Dev-Guru (the founder in person), whose initial step was to make himself the object of worship, is to-day in full swing. As for the Râdhâsvâmi-Satsang, founded by a trinity of successive, but indistinguishable holy Gurus, whose deaths occurred in 1878, 1898 and 1907 respectively, it is only since the end of the last century that their doctrine has become firmly established. We need not therefore take it into consideration in this account. The seat of the Dev-Samāj is at Lahore, and almost all its adherents are in the Punjab. The two chief centres of the

curiosity. But what they found there sometimes provoked a sudden quiet outburst of hilarity untinted with malice from this indiscreet visitor.

The story of his visit to the imposing Devendranath Tagore, as told by himself, is a titbit of comedy, wherein the critical humour and the disrespectful respect of the "little brother" towards the great pontiff, the "King Janaka," have free play.

"Is it possible," a questioner asked him one day, "to reconcile the world and God? What do you think of Maharshi Devendranath Tagore?"

Ramakrishna repeated softly, "Devendranath Tagore . . . Devendranath . . . Devendra . . ."—and he bowed several times. Then he said,

"Do you know what he is? Once upon a time there was a man, whose custom it was to celebrate the feast of Durgâ Pujâ with great pomp. Goats were sacrificed from morning till night. After some years the sacrifice lost its brilliancy. Somebody asked the man why it was so greatly reduced, and the man replied, 'I have lost my teeth now.'"

"And so," continued the irreverent

Hence it is to be noted that both belong to Northern India. Glasenapp says nothing of the appearance of new religions in Southern India, but they were no less numerous. Such was the religion of the great Guru, Sri Narayana, whose beneficent spiritual activity was exercised for more than forty years in the state of Travancore over some million faithful souls (he has just died in 1928). His doctrine was impregnated with the monist metaphysics of Sankara, but tended to practical action, showing very marked differences from Bengal mysticism, whose Bhakti effusions filled him with mistrust. He preached, if one may say so, a Jñāna of action, a great intellectual religion, having a very lively sense of the people and their social need. It has greatly contributed to the uplifting of the oppressed classes in Southern India and its activities have in a measure been allied to those of Gandhi. (Cf. Articles by his disciple, P. Natarajan, in the *Sufi Quarterly*, Geneva, December, 1928 and the following months.)

<sup>2</sup> Keshab Chunder Sen. The conversation is reported by an eye-witness, A. Kumar Dutt.

story-teller, "it is quite natural that Devendranath should practise meditation at his advanced age."<sup>3</sup>

He paused . . . "But," he added, bowing once more, "He is undoubtedly a very illustrious man . . ."

Then he recounted his visit.<sup>4</sup>

"At first when I saw him, I thought him rather proud. Oh! It was natural! He was overwhelmed by so many good things: nobility, prestige, riches . . . Suddenly I found myself in the state when I can see through a man. Then I consider the greatest, the richest, the most learned men as straw, if I do not see God . . . And a laugh escaped me . . . for I discovered that this man at the same time enjoyed the world and led a religious life. He had many children,

<sup>3</sup> It must be admitted that Ramakrishna's irony did Devendranath a grave injustice. It did not take into account, he probably did not know it, the absolute disinterestedness of the Maharshi and his years of noble and difficult sacrifice. Here I see the attitude of a man of the people to a great aristocrat.

Another account, given by Sashi Bhusan Ghosh in his *Memoirs* written in Bengali (pp. 245-7) lessens the irony without diminishing the penetration of Ramakrishna, so that justice is better done to the royal idealist.

Ramakrishna said that he was introduced to Devendranath with the words, "Here is a madman of God!" "Devendranath seemed to me to be concentrated upon his own ego, but why should he not have been so concentrated, when he enjoyed so much knowledge, renown, riches and unanimous respect? But I discovered that Yoga and Bhoga (material enjoyment) ran side by side in his life. . . I said to him, 'You are a true Janaka in this age of sin. Janaka was wont to see both sides at once. So you have kept your soul for God, while your body moves in the material world. That is why I have come to see you. Tell me something about God!'" . . .

<sup>4</sup> Rabindranath Tagore was then four years old. Ramakrishna was introduced by his patron, Mathur Babu, who had been a fellow student of Devendranath. A curious detail of the visit may interest our European psychophysiologists. Hardly were the introductions over than Ramakrishna asked Devendranath to undress and show him his chest. Devendranath complied without showing much astonishment. The colour of the skin was scarlet. Ramakrishna examined it. For this

all young. So in spite of his being a great Jñānin, he had to reconcile himself to the world. I said to him, 'You are the King Janaka of our day. He belonged to the world and yet he attained the highest realisations. You are in the world, but your mind rests on the heights of God. Tell me something of Him.'"

Devendranath recited to him some beautiful passages from the Veda,<sup>3</sup> and the interview proceeded on a tone of familiar courtesy. Devendranath was much struck by the fire in the eyes of his visitor, and he invited Ramakrishna to a feast for the next day. But he begged him to "cover his body a little," if he wished to be present: for the little pilgrim had not put himself to the trouble of making a toilet. Ramakrishna replied with wicked good fellowship that he could not be depended upon; he was as he was, and would come as he was. So they parted very good friends. But early the next morning a very polite note came from the great aristocrat, begging him not to put himself to any trouble. And that was the end. With one caressing stroke of the paw aristocracy remained aloof, secure in its paradise of idealism.

Dayananda was summed up, judged and executed as of less worth still. It must be admitted that when the two men met at the end of 1873, the Arya Samaj had not yet been founded and

the reformer was still in the midst of his career. When Ramakrishna examined him,<sup>4</sup> he found in him "a little power," by which he meant, "real contact with the Divine." But the tortured and torturing character, the bellicose athleticism of the champion of the Vedas, his feverish insistence that he alone was in the right, and therefore had the right to impose his will, were all blots on his mission to Ramakrishna. He saw him day and night disputing concerning the Scriptures, twisting their meaning, and striving at all costs to found a new sect. But all such preoccupation with personal and worldly success sullied the real love of God, and so he turned away from Dayananda.

His relations with Keshab Chunder Sen were of quite a different nature. They were intimate, affectionate, and lasting.

Before speaking of them I must express regret that the disciples of the two masters have left us such prejudiced accounts. Each side has been at considerable pains to "vassalise" the other man of God in favour of its own saint. Ramakrishna's disciples still speak of Keshab with sympathetic regard, and thank him for the homage he yielded to the Paramahansa. But some of Keshab's disciples cannot forgive Rama-

<sup>3</sup> He recognised in him also this characteristic redness of the breast.

sign of the practice of certain Yoga. Ramakrishna never omitted to examine the breast of his disciples, their breathing capacity, and the soundness of their circulation before allowing or forbidding them to undertake exercises of great concentration.

<sup>4</sup> "This universe is to be likened to a candelabra. And each one of us is a bulb. If we do not burn the whole candelabra becomes dark. God has created man to celebrate His glory. . . ."

In Sashi's account Ramakrishna made this naive reflection:

"It is strange! While I was meditating in the Panchavati (the grove of Dakshineswar), I also saw an image like a candelabra. . . . Devendranath must really be a very profound man!"

During one of Ramakrishna's interviews as noted by Mahendra Nath Gupta (*The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*) on November 28, 1883, a singular statement with regard to Dayananda is attributed to Ramakrishna. He had heard that Dayananda, burning to measure himself against Keshab Chunder Sen on the subject of his Vedic Gods, in whom Keshab did not believe, cried out, "The Lord has done so many things! Can He not also have made the Gods?" This was not in accordance with the views publicly professed by Dayananda, the implacable enemy of polytheism. Was Dayananda's exclamation inexactely reported to Ramakrishna, or did it refer, not to the Gods, but to the Vedic sacrificial fire, which Dayananda believed in on the faith of the infallible Vedas? I cannot explain this apparent contradiction.



krishna for the ascendancy, real or apparent, he exercised over their master ; hence in order to deny that any such influence could have existed, they have reverted to the plan of raising between them insurmountable barriers of thought ; they scornfully misrepresent Ramakrishna's true worth, and their harmful spite is also directed against the man who preached his Gospel, and made it victorious—Vivekananda.<sup>7</sup>

But having read certain beautiful and fresh pages concerning Keshab, wherein the ideas and actions of Vivekananda are distinctly recorded, I can well understand that the Brahmos chafe under the silence and oblivion into which the Ramakrishna Mission has allowed them to fall. So far as lies in my power, I shall try to amend this injustice ; for I believe it to be nothing but unwitting. But Keshab's memory could not be worse revenged than by being confined by certain Brahmos within their own narrow limits and by putting in the shade the disinterested affection felt by Keshab for Ramakrishna. In the whole of Keshab's life, worthy as it is of respect and affection, there is nothing more deservedly dear to us than the attitude of respect and affection adopted from the first by this great man at the very height of his fame and climax of his thought, and maintained until the end, towards the Little Poor Man of Dakshineswar, then either obscure or misrepresented. The more the Brahmos attempt, their pride hurt by the familiarities of the "mad-man of God" with the prince of intellectuals, to extract from the writings

of Keshab proud denunciations of disordered ecstasy, such as they attribute to Ramakrishna,<sup>8</sup> the more striking is the contrast of Keshab's actual relations to Ramakrishna.

If it is true that Keshab, unlike most of the religious men of India, never took a Guru, an intermediary between himself and the Divinity,<sup>9</sup> it is untrue to say that he was a disciple of Ramakrishna, as is claimed by the Ramakrishnites ; his generous spirit was ever ready to appreciate greatness, and his love of truth was too pure for vanity to have any part in it. Hence this teacher was ever ready to learn,<sup>10</sup> and said of himself, "I am a born disciple

<sup>7</sup> Cf. B. Mozoomdar, *op. cit.* Chapter II. In his treatise on Yoga Keshab says : "Knowledge and Bhakti are interchangeable terms. Bhakti is only possible in those who have knowledge, an unknowing Bhakta is an impossibility." But this does not condemn the religious ecstasies of Ramakrishna ; for first it must be proved that a higher form of knowledge was not contained therein. It merely marks the different character of Keshab's contemplations, for whom the highest condition consisted in a union of mind with the Eternal, wherein the practical intelligence was not obscured in the midst of the manifold occupations of life, society and the home. Keshab's views were in accordance with the spiritual traditions of the Brahmo Samaj. Further in Chapter III Mozoomdar quotes Keshab as saying, "Fie a hundred times to the Yogin, if he abandons everything for the love of Yoga! . . . It is a sin to abandon those whom God has given us to cherish." He claims to find in these words a reference to Ramakrishna as having neglected his duties towards his wife. But it is untrue to say that he neglected them. Not only did he love his wife with a profound and pure love, but he knew how to inspire her with a love, which for her was a source of peace and happiness. I have already shown how seriously he took his responsibility to her, and that he did not allow his disciples to give up duties already contracted to old parents, or to wife and children dependent upon them in order to follow him.

<sup>8</sup> "From the beginning of my religious life," he wrote, "I have been ever wont to receive instruction from Thee, my God! . . ."

<sup>9</sup> "I have been happy to find the same point of view that I have adopted in the beautiful book, illumined by the faith of

<sup>7</sup> I have in mind chiefly the pamphlet of B. Mozoomdar : *Professor Max Müller on Ramakrishna ; the World on K. Chunder Sen, 1900*, Calcutta. (Cf. Chapter II, Absurd Inventions and Reports made to Max Müller by the Disciples of Ramakrishna ; Chapter III, Differences between the Two Doctrines ; and above all the insulting Chapter V, Concerning Vivekananda, the Informant of Max Müller, which does not scruple to join forces with some Anglo-American clergymen, lacerated by the thunderous religious polemics of the great Swami.)

... all objects are my masters. I learn from everything."<sup>11</sup> How then can he have failed to learn from the Man of God?

During the early months of 1875 Keshab happened to be with his disciples at a villa near Dakshineswar. Ramakrishna went to visit him<sup>12</sup> with the words:

"I hear you have seen a vision of God. I have come to find out what it is."

Thereupon he began to sing a famous hymn to Kali, and in the midst of it he fell into an ecstasy. Even for these Hindus enlightened by reason this was an ordinary sight; and Keshab, who, as we have seen, was sufficiently suspicious of such rather morbid manifestations of devotion, would hardly have been struck by it, if, on coming out of Samādhi at the instance of his nephew,<sup>13</sup> Ramakrishna had not forth-

with launched into a flood of magnificent words regarding the One and Infinite God. His ironic good sense appeared even in this inspired outpouring, and it struck Keshab very forcibly. He charged his disciples to observe it. After a short time he had no doubt that he was dealing with an exceptional personality, and in his turn went to seek it out. They became friends. He invited Ramakrishna to the ceremonies of his Brahmo Samaj; or else came to take him from his temple for excursions on the Ganges; and since his generous soul was obliged to share his discoveries with others, he spoke everywhere of Ramakrishna, in his sermons, and in his writings for journals and reviews, both in English and in the native languages. His own fame was put at Ramakrishna's disposal, and it was through Keshab that his reputation, which until then had with a few near exceptions not reached the popular religious masses, came to be known in a short time within the intellectual middle class circles of Bengal and beyond.

The modesty shown by the noble Keshab, the illustrious chief of the Brahmo Samaj, rich in learning and prestige, in bowing down before this unknown man, ignorant of book-learning and a knowledge of Sanskrit, who could hardly read and who wrote with difficulty, is truly admirable. But his penetration confounded him and he sat at his feet as a disciple.

But let me never say that Keshab was the disciple of Ramakrishna, as is claimed by some over-zealous followers of the latter. It is not true to say that any one of his essential ideas was

Manilal C. Parekh, a Christian disciple of Keshab (*Brahmarshi Keshab Ch. Sen*, 1926, Oriental Christ House, Rajkot, Bombay). Manilal C. Parekh clearly recognises that Keshab owed much to Ramakrishna, probably more than Ramakrishna owed to him. But, like myself, he sees in it another reason for admiring the largeness of his spirit and his great heart.

<sup>11</sup> But he says also: "God has implanted in me the power to aspire to the good qualities of every man."

<sup>12</sup> He had marked him as early as 1865, when young Keshab was Devendranath's second at the head of the Adi Brahmo Samaj. Keshab's face had struck him. It was not the kind that is easily forgotten. Keshab was tall, his face oval, "his complexion clear like that of an Italian." (Mukerji). But if his spirit, like his face, was tinged by the tender sun of the West, the depths of his soul remained Indian. Ramakrishna, watching him as he meditated, was not mistaken. "On the platform of the Brahmo Samaj several people were meditating," he says of his visit in 1865. "In the centre of the group was Keshab lost in contemplation; he was as motionless as a piece of wood. He was then quite a young man; but it was at his bait that the fish was nibbling. . ." (a familiar metaphor meaning that God was responding to his appeal alone).

<sup>13</sup> For the interest of European science, it is to be noted that the only method of

recalling Ramakrishna from his ecstatic trances was to pronounce in his ear such or such a name of the Lord, or some Mantra (form of prayer), differing according to the degree and the form of the ecstasy. The character of psychic concentration was then very marked; and it was impossible to speak of any initial physiological disorder; the spirit always remained in full control.

derived from him; for they were already formed when he met Ramakrishna for the first time. We have seen that after 1862 he began to conceive of the harmony of religions and their original unity. He said in 1863, "All truths are common to all, for all are of God. Truth is no more European than Asiatic, no more yours than mine." In 1869 in the course of a lecture on the Future Church, he visualised all religions as a vast symphony, wherein each one, while keeping its distinctive character, the tone of its instrument, the register of its voice, united to praise God the Father and Man the Brother in one universal anthem. On the other hand, it is false to claim that Keshab needed Ramakrishna's help to arrive at his conception of the Mother—a conception common to all ages in India, as that of the Father in the West. Ramakrishna did not create it. The hymns of Ramprasad, stored within his memory, sing Her in all keys. The idea of God's maternity had been incorporated in the Brahmo Samaj during the pontificate of Devendranath. Keshab's disciples have no difficulty in citing invocations to the Mother all through the work of their Master.<sup>14</sup>

Undoubtedly the twin ideas of the Divine Mother and the brotherhood of Her worshippers were beautiful ones, whatever the forms of their ritual and means of expression, and, as ideas, they were already possessed by Keshab and revived by his sincere faith. But it was another matter to find them alive

and vital in a Ramakrishna! The Little Poor Man was not troubled by theories; he simply *was*. He *was* the communion of the Gods with believers; **he was the Mother and Her adorer**; he saw Her; She was seen through him, She could be touched. What a discovery this genius of heart, who communicated to those coming into contact with him the warm breath of the Goddess and the shelter of Her beautiful arms, was to Keshab, and how deeply he must have felt its impact: for he too was a Bhakta, a believer through Love!<sup>15</sup>

"The sweet, simple, charming and childlike nature of Ramakrishna coloured the Yoga of Keshab and his immaculate conception of religion," wrote Chiranjib Sarma, one of his biographers.

And one of the missionaries of Keshab's Church, Babu Girish Chundra Sen,<sup>16</sup> wrote,

"It was from Ramakrishna that Keshab received the idea of invoking God by the sweet name of Mother with the simplicity of a child. . . ."<sup>17</sup>

Only the last quotation needs comment; for we have shown that Keshab did not wait for Ramakrishna before invoking the Mother. Ramakrishna, however, brought him a renewal of

<sup>14</sup> Promotho Lall Sen says that he communed daily with God.

<sup>15</sup> "Let prayer be your chief preoccupation! Pray ardently and without ceasing, alone and together, let it be the alpha and omega of your life!"

<sup>16</sup> *The Life and Teachings of the Paramahansa Ramakrishna*, Article in the *Dharmatala*.

<sup>17</sup> Babu Girish Chunder Sen and Chiranjib Sarma, quoted by the Ramakrishnites in support of their thesis, certainly exaggerate the influence of Ramakrishna on Keshab's Brahmo Samaj. Those who try to prove too much lay themselves open to suspicion. To write like Chiranjib Sarma that "the worship of God as Mother was due to Ramakrishna," is a contradiction of the facts. It is quite enough to say that Ramakrishna's example developed it in the Brahmo Samaj. The Brahmo cult was rather hard. "The shadow of Ramakrishna," to use a simile of Babu Girish Ch. Sen, "softened it."

<sup>1862</sup>: when Keshab was still the minister of the Adi Brahmo Samaj of Devendranath, a hymn was sung, "Sitting on the knees of the Mother."

<sup>1866</sup>: Manual of the Brahmo Samaj, "(O Divine Mother, bind me by Thy mercy. . . O Mother, come, draw near!")

<sup>1875</sup>: "Happy am I! I have been merged in the heart of the Mother, I am now among Her children; the Mother dances with Her children. . ."

(But before this last date the meeting of Keshab and Ramakrishna had taken place. Cf. B. Mozumdar, *op. cit.* Chapter III.)

love, and immediate certitude, the heart of a child. Hence it was not the discovery of the "New Dispensation" that Keshab began to preach in the same year, 1875, that his path crossed Ramakrishna's,<sup>18</sup> but rather an irresistible outpouring of faith and joy that made him cry his message to the world.

Ramakrishna was a wonderful stimulant for the Brahmos, a tongue of flame dancing at Pentecost over the heads of the apostles, burning and enlightening them. He was at once their sincere friend and their judge, who spared neither his affection nor his mischievous criticism.

When he first visited the Brahmo Samaj his penetrating and amused glance had seen through the rather conventional devotion of its excellent members. According to his own humorous account:<sup>19</sup>

"The leader said: 'Let us commune with Him.' I thought, 'They will now go into the inner world and stay a long time.' Hardly had a few minutes passed when they all opened their eyes. I was astonished. Can anyone find Him after so slight a meditation?"

"Nevertheless Pratap Chandra Mozoomdar, in his sympathetic life of Keshab, admits that the meeting with Ramakrishna, without altering the essentially theistic character of the New Dispensation, led Keshab to present it in a more conciliatory and easily accessible form.

Ramakrishna "had gathered the essential conceptions of Hindu polytheism into an original structure of eclectic spirituality. . . . This strange eclecticism suggested to Keshab's appreciative mind the thought of broadening the spiritual structure of his own movement. . . . The Hindu conceptions of the Divine attributes spontaneously recommended themselves as beautiful and true, and also as the surest means of making his faith intelligible and acceptable to the land. Of course he kept the simple universal basis of theism intact." But Mozoomdar adds with regret that such a presentation of theism with a multiplicity of Divine attributes has since been exploited in favour of popular idolatry.

<sup>18</sup>Cf. Dhan Gopal Mukerji: *The Face of Silence*, 1928. (Saradananda gives a similar account in his chapter on the Brahmo Samaj and Ramakrishna).

After it was all over, when we were alone, I spoke to Keshab about it: 'I watched all your congregation communing with their eyes shut. Do you know what it reminded me of? Sometimes at Dakshineswar I have seen under the trees a flock of monkeys sitting, stiff and looking the very picture of innocence. . . . They were thinking and planning their campaign of robbing certain gardens of fruits, roots, and other edibles . . . in a few moments. The communing that your followers did with God to-day is no more serious.'

In a ritual hymn of the Brahmo Samaj this verse occurs:

"Think of Him and worship Him at every instant of the day!" Ramakrishna stopped the singer, and said, "You should alter the verse into 'Pray to Him and worship Him only twice a day.' Say what you do really. Why tell fibs to the Infinite?"

The Brahmo Samaj of Keshab, while it extolled faith, did so in a purposely stilted, abstract and solemn tone, reminiscent of the Anglican. It seemed to be always on guard against any suspicion of idolatry.<sup>20</sup> Ramakrishna took a mischievous delight in accusing it, not without justice, of mild idolatry. One day he heard Keshab in prayer enumerating all the perfections of the Lord.

"Why do you give these statistics," he asked him. "Does a son say to his

<sup>20</sup> Here is a type of Brahmo prayer, quoted in *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*:

"Om! Thou art our Father. Give us knowledge! Do not destroy us!

"Om! Brahman! Truth! Knowledge! Infinite! He is Bliss and Immortality! He shines! He is Peace! He is the Good! He is the One! . . .

"We bow before Thee, O Supreme Being, O First Great Cause! . . . We bow before Thee, O Light of Knowledge, O Support of all the worlds!

"From the Unreal lead us to the Real! From Darkness lead us to Light! From Death lead us to Immortality! Reach us through and through our self! And evermore protect us, O Thou Terrible, by Thy sweet compassionate face!"

father, 'O my father, you possess so many houses, so many gardens, so many horses, etc.' . . . ? It is natural for a father to put his resources at the disposal of his son. If you think of Him and His gifts as something extraordinary, you can never be intimate with Him, you cannot draw near to Him. Do not think of Him as if He were far away from you. Think of Him as your nearest! Then He will reveal Himself to you. . . Do you not see that if you go into an ecstasy over His attributes, you become an idolator?"<sup>21</sup>

Keshab protested against this attack on a sensitive point; he declared that he hated idolatry, that the God he worshipped was a formless God. Ramakrishna answered quietly, "God is with form and without form. Images and other symbols are just as valid as your attributes and these attributes are no different from idolatry, but are merely hard and petrified forms of it."

And again,

"You wish to be strict and partial. . . . For myself I have a burning desire to worship the Lord in as many ways as I can; nevertheless my heart's desire has never been satisfied. I long to worship with offerings of flowers and fruits, to repeat His holy name in solitude, to meditate upon Him, to sing His hymns, to dance in the joy of the Lord! . . . . Those who believe that God is without form attain Him just as well as those who believe He has form. The only two essentials are faith and self-abandon. . . ."<sup>22</sup>

I can copy the colourless words, but I cannot communicate the real presence, the radiance of person, the tone of voice, the look in the eyes and the captivating smile. Nobody who ever came in contact with them could resist them. It was above all his living certitude that impressed the onlookers; for with him words were not, as with

others, a loose and ornamental robe, hiding as much as they claimed to reveal of the unfathomable depths of life; with him the depths of life blossomed, and God, who for the majority even of religious men, is a frame of thought drawing an impenetrable veil across "the Unknown Master-piece,"<sup>23</sup> was to be seen in him; for as he spoke he lost himself in God, like a bather who dives and reappears dripping after a moment, bringing with him the smell of seaweed, the taste of the salt of the Ocean. Who can rid himself of its tang? The scientific spirit of the West can indeed analyse it. But whatever its elements, its synthetic reality was never in doubt. The greatest sceptic can touch the diver as he returns from the depths of the Dream, and catch some reflection of submarine flora from his pupils. Keshab and several of his disciples were intoxicated with it.

The strange dialogues of this Indian Plato, delivered on Keshab's yacht as it went up and down the Ganges,<sup>24</sup> deserve to be read. Their narrator, afterwards Ramakrishna's evangelist, was the first to be astonished that such a meeting could have come about between such opposite types of mind. What common ground could there be between the man of God and the man of the world, the great intellectual, the Anglomaniac Keshab, whose reason condemned the Gods? Keshab's disciples pressed round the two sages at the port-hole of the cabin, like a swarm of flies. And as the honey of his words began to flow from Ramakrishna's lips, the flies were drowned in their sweetness.

"It is now more than forty-five years

<sup>23</sup> Allusion to a celebrated "novel" of the great writer, Balzac.

<sup>24</sup> Two of them are to be found in an account by M. (Mahendra Nath Gupta), the author of the *Gospel of Ramakrishna*, dated October 27, 1882. Another witness, Nagendra-nath Gupta gives an account of another interview in 1881. (Cf. *The Modern Review*, Calcutta, May, 1927.)

<sup>21</sup> *Life of Sri Ramakrishna*, p. 365 and *The Face of Silence*.

<sup>22</sup> Mukerji.

ago that this happened and yet almost everything that the Paramahansa said is indelibly impressed on my memory. I have never heard any other man speak as he did . . . As he spoke he would draw a little closer to Keshab until part of his body was unconsciously resting on Keshab's lap, but Keshab sat perfectly still and made no movement to withdraw himself."

Ramakrishna looked with affectionate intensity on the faces surrounding him, and described their moral character one by one, as delineated in their features, first the eyes, then the forehead, the nose, the teeth, and the ears; for they formed a language to which he had the key. As he spoke with his sweet and attractive stammer he came to the subject of the Nirākāra Brahman, the formless God.

"He repeated the word Nirākāra two or three times and then quietly passed into Samādhi as the diver slips into the fathomless deep . . . We intently watched him. The whole body relaxed and then became slightly rigid. There was no twitching of the muscles or nerves, no movement of any limb. Both his hands lay in his lap with the fingers lightly interlocked. The sitting posture of the body was easy but absolutely motionless. The face was slightly tilted up and in repose. The eyes were nearly but not wholly closed. The eyeballs were not turned up or otherwise deflected, but they were fixed . . . The lips were parted in a beatific and indescribable smile, disclosing the gleam of the white teeth. There was something in that wonderful smile which no photograph was ever able to reproduce."<sup>25</sup>

He was recalled to the world by the singing of a hymn. . . .

"He opened his eyes and looked around him as if he were in a strange

place. The music stopped. The Paramahansa looking at us said, 'Who are these people?' And then he vigorously slapped the top of his head several times, and cried out, 'Go down, go down!' . . . The Paramahansa became fully conscious and sang in a pleasant voice (a hymn of Kali)."

He sang the identity of the Divine Mother with the Absolute. He sang the joy of the flying kite of the soul, launched by the Mother while She keeps it attached to Her by the string of Illusion.<sup>26</sup>

"The world is the Mother's plaything. It is Her pleasure to let slip from Illusion one or two flying kites among the thousands. It is Her sport. She says to the human soul in confidence with a wink of the eye: 'Go and live in the world until I tell you to do something else!' . . ."

And in imitation of Her he turned to the disciples of Keshab with an indulgent irony that made them laugh.

"You are in the world. Stay there! It is not for you to abandon it. You are very well as you are, pure gold and alloy, sugar and treacle. . . . We sometimes play a game in which one must gain seventeen points to win. I have passed the limit and I have lost. But you clever people, who have not won enough points, can still continue to play. . . . In truth, it matters little if you live in the family or in the world, so long as you do not lose contact with God."

And it was in the course of these monologues, wherein observation and ecstasy, mocking common sense and highest speculation were so wonderfully blended, that the Paramahansa pro-

<sup>25</sup> The metaphor of the flying kite is to be found, as we have said, in a hymn of Ramprasad, which Ramakrishna loved to sing: "The Divine Mother and the Liberated Soul." It is also used in a hymn of Nareishchandra quoted in the *Gospel*. Nearly all the metaphors, particularly that of the diver to the depths of the Ocean of Life, are used again and again with variations in the poetic and musical folklore of Bengal from the XVth century onwards.

<sup>26</sup> Nagendranath Gupta.

In another ecstasy, the one described by M., Ramakrishna spoke to the Mother: "O Mother, they are all fastened inside their bars, they are not free; is it possible to loose them from their prison?"

duced his beautiful parables, quoted above, of the Divine Reservoir with several ghâts (steps) and of Kali, the Spider. He had too keen a sense of reality, he saw too clearly to the very bottom of his listeners, to imagine that he could raise them to the heights of his own liberated soul. He measured their wisdom and their capacity, and he asked nothing of them beyond their powers, but he asked for the whole of that! Above all he communicated to Keshab and his disciples the spirit of life, the creative breath, coupled with a wide and intellectual tolerance, which recognised the truth in quite diverse points of view previously considered by them to be irreconcilable. He freed their intellectual limbs, petrified within the groove of reason, and made them supple. He tore them from their abstract discussions. "Live, love and create!", so that blood again flowed through their veins.

"To create is to be like God," he said to Keshab, who was then spending himself in endless and fruitless polemics. "When you yourself are filled with the essence of existence, all that you say will come true. Poets in all ages have praised truth and virtue. But does that make their readers virtuous or truthful? When a man despoiled of self comes among us, his acts are the very pulses of the heart of virtue; all that he does to others makes even their most humdrum dreams greater, so that all that they touch becomes true and pure; they become the father of reality."<sup>27</sup> And what he

creates never dies. That is what I expect of you. Make the dogs of invective keep quiet. Let the elephant of Being sound the clarion trumpet of his benediction over all living things! You possess this power. Are you going to use it, or are you going to waste this brief span called life in fighting other people?"<sup>28</sup>

Keshab listened to his advice and took deep root in this warm living earth, bathed in the sap emanating from the Universal Being. Ramakrishna made him feel that no particle of this sap was ever lost, even in the most humble plant of human thought. His mind was sympathetically reopened to all other forms of faith, even to certain outward practices, which he had avoided. He was to be seen invoking by their names Shiva, Shakti, Saraswatî, Lakshmi, Hari, identifying God's attributes with them. For two years he was absorbed in each of the great religious types, the heroic Incarnations of the Spirit: Jesus, Buddha, Chaitanya, each representing one side of the Great Mirror. He sought to assimilate them each in turn, so that through their synthesis he might realise the universal ideal. During his last illness he was especially drawn to that form of Bhakti most familiar to Ramakrishna—a passionate love of the Mother. Keshab's disciples told Ramakrishna, when he came to see him during his last days on earth, that "a great change had taken place." "Often we find him talking to the Divine Mother, waiting for Her and weeping." And Ramakrishna, enraptured by this news, fell into an ecstasy. 'There is nothing more touching in the whole account of this supreme interview'<sup>29</sup> than the appear-

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Gandhi, who was averse to all religious propaganda by word or writing. When he was asked, "How then can we share our experience with others?" he replied, "Our spiritual experiences are necessarily shared and communicated whether we suspect it or not—but by our lives and our examples, not by our words, which are a very inadequate vehicle. Spiritual experiences are deeper than thought itself. By the very fact that we live spiritual lives experience will overflow. But if you deliberately set yourself to share your spiritual experience with another, you raise an intellectual barrier between

you." (Discussions at the Council of the Federation of International Fellowship, Satyagraha Ashram, Sabarmati, January 15, 1928.)

<sup>28</sup> Mukerji.

<sup>29</sup> *Gospel of Ramakrishna*, I, Section V, Chapters 1 and 2. It was on November 28, 1883 at the close of the day that Ramakrishna entered the house of Keshab with several of his disciples.

ance of the dying Keshab, shaken by a mortal cough, holding on to the walls, supporting himself by the furniture, coming to cast himself at the feet of Ramakrishna. The latter was still half plunged in ecstasy, and was talking to himself. Keshab was silent, drinking in the mysterious words that seemed to come from the Mother Herself. They explained to him with ruthless but consoling tranquillity the deep meaning of his sufferings and his approaching death.<sup>30</sup> With what deep insight he understood the hidden confusion of this life of faith and restless love!

"You are ill," he said sweetly. "There is a profound meaning in that. Through your body have passed many deep waves of devotion seeking for the Lord. Your illness bears witness to these emotions. It is impossible to tell what damage they do to the organism at the time they are produced. A boat passes along the Ganges without attracting attention. But some time afterwards a great wave, displaced by its passage, dashes against the bank and washes away part of it. When the fire of the Divine Vision enters the frail house of the body, it first burns the passions, then the false ego, and at last it consumes everything. . . . You have not yet reached the end. . . . Why did you allow your name to be inscribed on the registers of the Lord's hospital? You will never be allowed to come out until

<sup>30</sup> Ramakrishna, hardly awakened from ecstasy, looked round at the drawing-room full of beautiful furniture and mirrors. Then he smiled and spoke to himself: "Yes, all these things have had their uses some time ago; but now they serve no purpose. You are here, Mother. . . . How beautiful You are! . . ." At this moment Keshab entered and fell at Ramakrishna's feet. "Here I am," he said. Ramakrishna looked at him without seeming to recognise him clearly, and continued his monologue about the Mother and human life. Between the two men not a word was spoken about Keshab's health, although it was the object of the visit. It was not until after some time that Ramakrishna uttered the words I have quoted above.

the word 'Healed' is written across them."

He then invoked the gracious parable of the divine gardener digging round the roots of a precious rose tree, so that it might drink the night dew."

"Illness digs round the roots of your being."

Keshab listened in silence and smiled; for it was Ramakrishna's smile that shed a light of mysterious serenity into the funeral darkness of the house and into the sufferings of the sick man. Ramakrishna did not adopt a solemn tone until Keshab, exhausted, was about to leave him. Then he suggested to the dying man that he ought not to live so much in the inner room with the women and children, but alone with God.

And it is said that in his death agony, Keshab's last words were, "Mother! . . . Mother! . . ."<sup>32</sup>

<sup>31</sup> "The gardener knows how to treat the common rose, and how to treat the rose of Bassora. He loosens the earth round her roots, so that she may benefit from the night dew. The dew gives strength and freshness to the rose. It is even so with you. The Divine Gardener knows how to treat you. He digs round you right down to the roots, so that His dew may fall upon you, that you may become purer and your work greater and more enduring." (*Gospel of Ramakrishna*, Vol. I, Section V, Chapter II.)

<sup>32</sup> The repercussion of some of Ramakrishna's words, spoken during his last interview with Keshab, on the latter's last thoughts, have, I think, never before been noticed.

Ramakrishna spoke to him for a long time about the Mother and said, "She watches over Her children. . . . She knows how to obtain true freedom and knowledge for them. The child knows nothing. . . . Its Mother knows everything. . . . All is ordered according to Her will. 'You fulfil Your own will, O Divine Mother, and accomplish Your own work. The foolish man says, "It is I, who have accomplished."'"

Moreover, when Keshab in the midst of his own sufferings was consoling his real, his mortal mother, who had given him life, he said, "The Supreme Mother sends everything for my good. She plays with me, turning sometimes to one side, sometimes to the other."



It is so easy to understand how this great idealist, who believed in God, Reason, Goodness, Justice and Truth, should have discovered during these tragic days that he was too far from the High God, the Unattainable God, and that he needed to draw near to Him and to touch Him with the dust of Ramakrishna's feet, to see Him and hear Him through Ramakrishna, and find refreshment in his fever. Such is an expression of universal experience. But it is just this for which some of Keshab's proud disciples cannot forgive Ramakrishna. On the other hand I must beg the Ramakrishnites not to make too much of it, but rather let them follow the example of their sweet Master. When Keshab had just left him after this last interview here described, Ramakrishna spoke modestly and with admiration of Keshab's greatness, which had won the respect both of a social and intellectual elite and of simple believers like himself. And he continued to show his esteem for the Brahmo Samaj.<sup>33</sup> The best of the

Brahmos have held him in veneration in their turn,<sup>34</sup> and have known how to profit from their intercourse with him. His influence widened their brain and their heart and did more than anybody else's to bring them into line in people's estimation with the best thought of India, which the first influx of the scientific knowledge of the West, badly assimilated, threatened to alienate.

One example will suffice; his great disciple, Vivekananda, came from the ranks of the Brahmo Samaj and from the most bigoted, at least for a time, of iconoclasts, in the name of Western reason against Hindu tradition, which later he learnt to respect and defend. The true thought of the West has lost nothing through this Hindu awakening. The thought of the East is now independent, and henceforth union can be effected between equal and free personalities, instead of the one being subjugated by the other, and one of the two civilisations being assassinated by the other.

<sup>33</sup> In 1878 after the fresh schisms within the Brahmo Samaj, Ramakrishna remained faithful to Keshab when he was deserted by a section of his disciples. But he refused to make any distinction between the three separate branches of the Brahmo Samaj, joining them all alike in prayer. *The Gospel of Ramakrishna* has recorded several of these visits, in particular one of October 28, 1882, when he was invited and was present at the annual festival of Keshab's Brahmo Samaj. He was eagerly surrounded and questioned on religious problems, and replied with his usual breadth of spirit. He took part in the song (the song of Kabir), and in the sacred dances. When he retired he saluted all forms of devotion, ending up with homage to the Brahmo Samaj: "Salutations to the feet of the Jñānin! Salutations to the feet of the Bhakta! Salutations to the devout who believe in God with form! Salutations to the devout who believe in a God without form! Salutations to the

ancient knowers of Brahman! Salutations to the modern knowers of the Brahmo Samaj!"

The other two branches of the Brahmo Samaj showed him far less regard. The most recent, the Sadharan Samaj, owed him a grudge on account of his influence over Keshab. At the Adi Brahmo Samaj of Devendranath he was doubtless regarded as belonging to a lower level. At one visit which he paid to it (May 2, 1883) which Rabindranath Tagore may perhaps remember, since he was present as a lad, his reception was hardly courteous. (Cf. *Gospel of Ramakrishna*.)

<sup>34</sup> Especially Keshab's successor, Pratap Chandra Mozoomdar, and Vijay Krishna Goswami, who later on separated himself from the Brahmo Samaj. The great composer and singer of Keshab's Samaj, Trailokya Nath Sanyal, maintains that many of his most beautiful songs were inspired by the ecstasies of Ramakrishna.

# PRACTICE OF RELIGION

BY ANANDA

KARMA YOGA

In the present article we shall try to deal briefly with *Karma Yoga*: All those who remain in the world, whether married or unmarried, and even many of those who have renounced, have to work more or less. It is not for all to remain absorbed in meditation or contemplation the whole day. Until the mind has been thoroughly purified, one cannot concentrate it for long on God. It will go out and seek worldly objects. In order to take advantage of even these outgoing tendencies of the mind and its occupations with the activities and objects of the world, *Karma Yoga* should be properly understood and practised.

The philosophy of *Karma Yoga* is simple. It is a fact that our body is a part of the vast material universe, and our mind, of the infinite cosmic mind. Now these cosmic body and mind have behind them, manipulating and controlling, the Universal Soul or God. If that is so, our own bits of body and mind have in fact God behind them as controller and manipulator. What is then the need of interposing our own ego between God and the body and mind? Let us withdraw it. It is unnecessary. The body and mind belong to God and not to me. Let me have no more to do anything with them and their activities. Henceforth let God move them. If we can actually realise this state, we shall at once find ourselves free from the body and mind and identified with *Brahman* Himself,—we shall realise our true self. But it is not at all easy to realise this state. Still, that is the goal and that the spirit in which we should try to do all our work. A *Karma Yogi* should always feel that he is not connected with the activities of the body and mind,—he is not the mover of them. This non-

attachment is the very essence of *Karma Yoga*.

The best exposition of *Karma Yoga* is to be found in the *Gîtâ*. In the *Gîtâ* the unmixed *Karma Yoga* is not generally propounded. For, very few can practise pure *Karma Yoga*. For most men *Karma Yoga* has to be related with *Bhakti* or *Jñâna Yoga*. That facilitates its practice. Thus the *Gîtâ* prescribes that we must dedicate the fruits of our actions to the Lord. If we have devotion to the Lord, we shall find it very easy to do so. Whatever we do, apparently good or evil, we have to dedicate at the feet of the Lord, so that the works may not affect us and we may through the continual practice of such surrender learn non-attachment. Or if we are followers of *Jñâna Yoga*, we may easily practise non-attachment in work, for the *Jñâna Yoga* itself will impel us to think ourselves as beyond all actions and their effects. Therefore in practice, it is best that *Karma Yoga* be combined with *Bhakti* or *Jñâna Yoga*.

There are at least three stages of the practice of *Karma Yoga*. First, *Karma Yoga* may be practised for the purification of the mind. Most people are selfish and full of unclean desires. They are ever engaged in satisfying those low, selfish desires. How can such minds as theirs ever conceive any spiritual ideals? Yet they must be brought up higher and higher if they are to become spiritual at all. For such, any practice of unselfish *Karma* is good. Let them work for the good of others. Of course even such services they will not be able to do in a non-attached way in the beginning. That does not matter in their case. Let them first practise unselfish work which itself is difficult for them. Let such unselfish

work purify their mind. When the mind has been purified sufficiently, they will intuitively feel that there is such a being as God or *Atman* existing, who is eternal and beyond the changing world; and they will feel a longing to realise Him. It will be possible for them now to dedicate their works and their results to God. This is the first stage of the practice of *Karma Yoga*,—work for the purification of the mind.

In the second stage, work is done in the spirit of worship. We are now so imbued with the idea of Divine existence that we do not want to feel separated from Him even for a single moment. We want to adore Him every moment of our life. That is easy so long as we pray to Him, or repeat His name, or meditate on Him, or sing His praise or read books concerning Him, or worship Him in the shrine. But there will be still other hours in which we shall not be connected with God in any such conscious way. We shall perhaps have to work for our living and discharge social duties. Then we feel inclined to conceive those apparently secular actions also as worship itself. Every moment of our life becomes a worship. Of course here also we dedicate everything to the Lord. In fact the desire to so dedicate is the very essence of all worship. And we try to be non-attached. But the spirit of worship makes it all very sweet and natural.

But the ego still persists. We yet do not feel that God is the doer and not we. We do not feel that God is manipulating our mind and body. When the spirit of worship grows intense, the self-effacement comes. Our self is lost in the consciousness of God. God suffuses our life and being and the world. In that condition we feel that everything is the *līlā* of God,—His divine sport. We are oned with God, and become partners in His *līlā*. This is the third stage. The great saints and prophets realise this state. Their thoughts and actions are no longer theirs, but of God Himself.

Obviously we have here to consider specially the case of those who are in the second stage. They are eager to realise God and devote all their time and energy to Him. What shall they do? Of course so long as they are consciously engaged in meditation or worship, they have little to worry about. But what shall they do with their, say, office work or family and social duties? These also they must conceive as worship. Suppose one is a clerk. He must conceive his clerical work also as worship. He must begin his office work with an earnest prayer that what he was going to do might be a worship of the Lord Himself. In his heart of hearts he must feel that his work at the desk was not for the satisfaction of his official superiors but for the satisfaction of the Lord. In the shrine he offers flowers, leaves and fragrance to the Lord, here his offering is his official works. In this spirit let him begin his work; let him remember this motive again and again in the middle; and when the daily work is over, let him dedicate it to God. Let him at the end of his day, offer all his thoughts, actions and desires, his body, mind and soul to the Lord. In this way, even his office work will become spiritualised. Suppose one is a mechanic in a factory. Let him also consider that his work is worship itself. The fact is, every work must be taken out of its apparent setting and offered at the feet of the Lord as we offer a flower. A new setting will have thus to be created for every work within our soul in intimate relation with God, sweetened by our own devotion and interpenetrated by the Divine presence. It is an inner world where God alone reigns, to which we shall have to transfer every work.

Our purpose, we must remember however, is not to *work*, but to be absorbed in God. No doubt at the height of *Karma Yoga*, this God-absorption comes of itself. But those who are not *Karma Yogins par excellence*, those who are essentially *Bhakti Yogins* or *Jñāna*

*Yogins*, will try to minimise work and be lost in the consciousness of God. Their effort should be to decrease the amount of apparently secular occupations of the day and to increase the period of meditation and prayer, so that there may not be any interposition of work even in the spirit of worship. In this way they may reach a condition when their whole day will be engaged in pure meditation and worship of the Lord, in a deep and prolonged ecstasy.

But perhaps it is necessary to repeat the warning of the *Gītā* that mere outward renunciation of work is not real renunciation. It should be above all internal. The mind must *naturally*,

*spontaneously* detach itself from all work. The condition of Divine saturation should be natural and not forced. For in the latter case, there is bound to be reaction and ultimate waste of time and energy. It is better, therefore, that we do not give up work forcibly, but try to perform it in the spirit of worship. When the spirit of worship has grown intense, the outer work will drop of itself, even without any conscious effort on our part.

It is needless to mention that we have here dealt with *Karma Yoga* as a spiritual discipline. It has a collective, a national aspect also. That does not concern us here.

## ASHTAVAKRA SAMHITA

By SWAMI NITYASWARUPANANDA

### CHAPTER X

#### QUIETUDE

अष्टावक्र उवाच ।

विहाय वैरिणं काममर्थं चानर्थसङ्कुलम् ।

धर्ममण्येतयोर्हेतुं सर्वत्रानादरं कुरु ॥१॥

वैरिणं Enemy कामं desire चण्डककुब् full of mischief चर्च worldly prosperity च and एतयोः of these two हेतुं cause धर्मं good work अपि also विहाय forsaking सर्वत्र every-where अनादरं disregard कुरु do.

1. Be indifferent to everything having given up *Kāma* (desire) the enemy,<sup>1</sup> *Artha* (worldly prosperity) which<sup>2</sup> is attended with mischief as well as *Dharma*<sup>3</sup> (good works) which is the cause of these two.

[<sup>1</sup> *Enemy*.—Because desire for sensual enjoyments obstructs the attainment of Knowledge and binds the soul to the world.

<sup>2</sup> *Which etc.*.—Because the acquisition and preservation of wealth are attended with difficulties, and are harmful to our higher nature.

<sup>3</sup> *Dharma etc.*.—*Dharma* is good work both secular and religious, especially the latter. By performing rituals as prescribed in the scriptures, we earn religious merits which confer on us worldly prosperity as well as sensual enjoyment.

*Dharma*, *Artha* and *Kāma* are the three ends of a common man's existence. But in order to attain *Moksha*, liberation, which is the *summum bonum* of life, one has to renounce all these three objects. The Absolute can never be reached as long as there is the least speck of desire. And without desire all these three ends are meaningless. Hence the necessity of renouncing these, so that our eyes may be opened to the Supreme Self.]

स्वप्नेन्द्रजालवत् पश्य दिनानि त्रीणि पञ्च वा ।

मित्रक्षेत्रधनगारदारदायादिसम्पदः ॥२॥

वैशि Three पञ्च five वा or दिनानि days (स्वायम्बुः lasting) मित्रक्षेत्रधनगारदारदायादिसम्पदः friends, lands, wealth, houses, wives, presents and such other good fortunes स्वप्नेन्द्रजालवत् like a dream or a juggler's show पश्य see.

2. Look upon friends, lands, wealth, houses, wives, presents and such other good fortunes as<sup>1</sup> a dream or a juggler's show, lasting<sup>2</sup> three or five days.

[<sup>1</sup> As etc.—i.e., unreal.

<sup>2</sup> Lasting etc.—i.e., very transitory.]

यत्र यत्र भवेत्तृष्णा संसारं विद्धि तत्र वै ।

प्रौढवैराग्यमाश्रित्य वीततृष्णः सुखी भव ॥३॥

यत्र यत्र Wherever तृष्णा desire भवेत् is तत्र there वै indeed संसारं world विद्धि know (यतः so) प्रौढवैराग्यं firm non-attachment आश्रित्य adopting वीततृष्णः free from desire सुखी happy भव be.

3. Know the world to be indeed wherever<sup>1</sup> there is desire. Betake yourself to firm<sup>2</sup> non-attachment, go beyond desire<sup>3</sup> and be happy.

[<sup>1</sup> Wherever etc.—Analysis shows that our knowledge of and entanglement in the world has desire for its root and basis. The moment one is completely freed from desire the world vanishes.

<sup>2</sup> Firm—indicates an attitude of absolute non-attachment to the objects of enjoyment even when they are in one's possession.

<sup>3</sup> Desire—for those objects that are yet to be obtained.]

तृष्णामात्रात्मको बन्धस्तन्नाशो मोक्ष उच्यते ।

भवासंसक्तिमात्रेण प्राप्तितुष्टिर्मुहुर्मुहुः ॥ ४ ॥

बन्धः Bondage तृष्णामात्रात्मकः consisting in desire alone तन्नाशः destruction of that मोक्षः liberation उच्यते is called भवासंसक्तिमात्रेण by non-attachment to the world alone मुहुर्मुहुः constantly प्राप्तितुष्टिः joy from Attainment (भवति is).

4. Bondage<sup>1</sup> consists only in desire and its<sup>2</sup> destruction is called liberation. By non-attachment to the world alone is attained constant joy from the realisation (of the Self).

[<sup>1</sup> Bondage etc.—See Note 1, last verse.

<sup>2</sup> Its—of desire.]

त्वमेकश्चेतनः शुद्धो जडं विश्वमसत्तथा ।

अविद्यापि न किञ्चित्सा का बुभुत्सा तथापि ते ॥५॥

त्वं You एकः One चेतनः Intelligent शुद्धः pure (यसि are) विश्वं universe जडं devoid of intelligence तथा and असत् non-existent (यसि is) अविद्या Ignorance अपि also न not किञ्चित् anything (भवति is) तथा अपि yet ते your का what सा that बुभुत्सा desire to know.

5. You are One, Intelligent and Pure. The universe is non-intelligent<sup>1</sup> and non-existent. Ignorance also is not anything. Yet what desire to know can there be for you?

[That the Self which is One, Intelligent and Pure is the only thing to be known has been emphasised here. We should not desire to know what is not absolutely real. And it is the Self alone which is such, while the world that is apparently presented to us and Ignorance that causes the appearance, are not really existent. The knowledge of the Self, therefore, should be the end and aim of our life, which alone will put an end to desire that constitutes bondage as mentioned in the previous verse.

<sup>1</sup> *Non-intelligent*—According to Vedanta philosophy, the conscious principle in nature is the reflection of Brahman Itself. All consciousness is of Self; all non-self is thus non-intelligent.]

राज्यं सुताः कलत्राणि शरीराणि सुखानि च ।

संसक्तस्यापि नष्टानि तव जन्मनि जन्मनि ॥६॥

संसक्तस्य Attached अपि though तव your राज्य' kingdom सुताः sons कलत्राणि wives शरीराणि bodies सुखानि pleasures च and जन्मनि जन्मनि birth after birth नष्टानि have been lost.

6. Kingdom, sons, wives, bodies and pleasures have been lost to you birth after birth, even though you were attached (to them).

[That the world is false has been mentioned in the previous verse. The idea is dilated upon here.

The second line of the verse gives a commonsense reason why we should take recourse to renunciation. Such is the transitory nature of worldly things that even when we love them dearly, we cannot retain them long,—they get lost and thus cause us suffering. This process has been repeated life after life. What then is the use of being attached to such things?]

अलमर्थेन कामेन सुकृतेनापि कर्मणा ।

एभ्यः संसारकान्तारे न विश्रान्तमभून्मनः ॥७॥

अर्थेन With prosperity कामेन with desire सुकृतेन pious कर्मणा with deed अपि and च मनः no need संसारकान्तारे in the dreary forest of the world मनः mind एभ्यः from these विश्रान्त' reposed न not अभूत् was.

7. Enough<sup>1</sup> of prosperity, desire and pious deed. The mind did not find repose in these in the dreary forest of the world.

[<sup>1</sup> *Enough etc.*—See note 3, verse 1 of this chapter.

Ashtavakra is again maintaining the worthlessness of *Dharma*, *Artha* and *Kāma* as ideals of life and emphasising *Moksha*.]

कृतं न कति जन्मानि कायेन मनसा गिरा ।

दुःखमायासदं कर्म तदद्याप्युपरम्यताम् ॥८॥

(त्वं You) कायेन with body मनसा with mind गिरा with speech कति how many जन्मानि births न not दुःख' painful चायासदं involving difficulty कर्म work कृतं did तत् so अद्य to-day अपि even उपरम्यताम् cease.

8. For how many incarnations have you not done hard and painful work with your body, mind and speech! Therefore cease at least to-day.

[We have our present body and misery as a result of our actions in the past incarnations. This process will continue so long as we continue to act and shall go from birth to birth. To escape misery for ever, we must cease from worldly activity at once.

Ashtavakra indicates that our past actions entailing so much labour and suffering have not given us any lasting happiness. Why should we then continue our worldly actions?]

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### In This Number

*Sri Ramakrishna on Himself* is translated from the Diary of M., a direct disciple of the Master, as published by him in Bengali. . . . We have great pleasure in introducing to our readers A SEEKER OF TRUTH who contributes *Politico-economic Reconstruction of India* to the present issue. The writer wishes to remain anonymous. But we may disclose that he is quite new to the readers of *Prabuddha Bharata*. His theme is an important one. We shall not make any comment on his argument, but shall leave our readers to form their own judgment on it. There is no doubt that they will find the article interesting and profitable-reading. . . . SWAMI NITYASWARUPANANDA concludes *A Seraphic Soul* in the present issue. . . . *Ramakrishna and the King-Shepherds of India* by ROMAIN ROLLAND, which is a brilliant study of the interactions between Sri Ramakrishna and Devendranath Tagore, Dayananda Sarasvati and Keshab Ch. Sen, calls yet for some answer to the charges the writer has brought against us, the followers of Sri Ramakrishna. We may assure the noble writer that we are always ready to learn and correct ourselves wherever we feel we have been mistaken. In the present case, however, we are not yet convinced that we have been wrong in our attitude towards Keshab Ch. Sen. We have our reasons which we would have shown in the present issue, had not want of space precluded us from doing so. We hope to publish our reply in the next number. . . . *Practice of Religion* by ANANDA is continuing and is expected to do so for some time more. Some readers have enquired after Ananda's real name and whereabouts. We wish we could comply with their requests. But Ananda is determined to remain completely incognito.

### "Reason v. Authority"

It is with reluctance that we are trying here to reply to what Mahatma Gandhi wrote in his *Young India* (September 26, 1929) under the caption, *Reason v. Authority*. He is not concerned with the subject of the controversy—*Charka* and *Khaddar*—in his present article ;— he is content to leave the final answer to that to time and experience. His present theme is that 'the inferential invocation of the authority of the illustrious dead in a reasoned discussion should be regarded as a sacrilege.' And he thus supports his thesis :

'I think that the duty of avoiding in a reasoned discussion inferences from the writings of the founder of an order devolves more specifically upon its members and its organ, for to sceptics the authority of the founder will be of no avail, even as the authority of Shri Krishna is of no use to one who is not his follower. And experience has shown, that in every case where there is an appeal to reason, any inference drawn from the writings of a great person, however illustrious he may be, is irrelevant and calculated to confuse the issues at stake. I would like the editor and the reader to note also that I have not criticised the citing of the specific writings of great men, but I have suggested the impropriety of drawing deductions from his writings instead of leaving the reader to draw his own from such writings. Thus, for instance, have not the so-called Christians distorted the undiluted message of Jesus? Have not sceptics drawn different and often opposite deductions from the same texts in the *Bhagavad Gita*, and is not the *Bhagavad Gita* today quoted in support even of assassination? To me it is as plain as a pike staff, that where there is an appeal to reason puffs and undefiled,

there should be no appeal to authority however great it may be."

From the above we understand that Mahatmaji allows us to quote from Swami Vivekananda, but he does not allow us to deduce anything from those quotations. He is against our inferring anything from Swami Vivekananda in course of our articles, because the readers of *Prabuddha Bharata*, according to him, hold a sceptical attitude towards the Swami and any inferences from him would thus be useless; because they are irrelevant and will confuse the issues at stake; and because we shall misinterpret the Swami. It is really surprising that Mahatmaji does not see to what position he is trying to reduce us by this his literary dictum. He asks us in effect to completely eschew all mention of Swami Vivekananda, all inferences from his life and teaching and all references to him as an authority. He even asks us not to preach anything in the name of Swami Vivekananda; whatever we are to say in *Prabuddha Bharata* should be said in our name. That is to say, *Prabuddha Bharata* should no longer claim to disseminate the teachings of the Swami. It is true, he has permitted us to quote from him; but evidently no quotation may be made in course of our articles. For to quote in course of an article is to use it in support of certain statements, and that will amount to a kind of interpretation and is thus not permissible. Unless we completely renounce Swami Vivekananda, our articles are bound to offend in any of the several ways to which Mahatmaji has referred in his article.

Does Mahatmaji really ask us to take up that position? We regret we cannot do so. *Prabuddha Bharata* is devoted to the dissemination of the truths of Vedanta and the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda. It cannot now give up its functions.

There is no doubt some truth in what Mahatmaji has said: there may be a

few sceptics among our readers, who would not like Swami Vivekananda to be referred to as an authority on matters spiritual and national. But we cannot for that reason give up all references to the Swami in *Prabuddha Bharata*. There is also no doubt the chance of misunderstanding and misinterpreting the Swami. But does it follow from this that all interpretation is misinterpretation? To us Mahatmaji's dictum seems to be unnecessarily extreme. According to him, the followers of a teacher should not preach or interpret him for others. Mahatmaji must excuse us, we are not prepared to follow this principle.

And obviously Mahatmaji does not read *Prabuddha Bharata* though we have been regularly sending it to him for the past several years. Had he done so, he would have found that it is always our habit—as all readers of *Prabuddha Bharata* will testify—to give every possible reason for our statements in our articles, and that we refer to the Swami only *after* having proved our theses. From the way in which Mahatmaji has written about us, one would imagine that we have not given enough reason in our articles, and that we have referred to the authority of Swami Vivekananda in lieu of arguments and have thus sought to cloud the issues for our readers. But what are the facts? Did Mahatmaji find any lack of reason in our articles? In the Notes, *The Thought of Mahatma Gandhi* (March, 1929) and *An Explanation* (April, 1929), on which Mahatmaji made such strong comments in his first article, there is only one reference to Swami Vivekananda, in the last paragraph of the first Note. This paragraph really did not form any part of our arguments. We gave full reasons for our opinion of the Khaddar Movement without invoking the authority of Swami Vivekananda or any other. After having finished our arguments we said in conclusion:

"The present age in India requires the formulation of a synthetic philo-



sophy of life and action, which will comprehend all the healthy impulses and aspirations of the human mind, and yet lead them and point to an ideal which is supramundane, spiritual, cosmic. The ideal has to be formulated and made living and invincible through the *tapasyā* and realisation of a dynamic spiritual personality. So far as we know, these conditions are fulfilled completely in the life and teachings of Swami Vivekananda. We showed it in our last month's editorial. When will India learn to walk in his footsteps?"

Is the above of such heinous character as to deserve the epithet "sacrilege?" Yet this paragraph evoked the following remarks from Mahatmaji: "What was more painful still was the exploitation of the name of Swami Vivekananda in connection with the double-edged theory propounded by the writer. The inferential invocation of the authority of the illustrious dead in a reasoned discussion should be regarded as a sacrilege." Even after perusing what Mahatmaji has said in his present article in support of his attitude, we confess we fail to see our guilt.

But perhaps what Mahatmaji has pre-eminently in mind is that we are misinterpreting Swami Vivekananda. We asked him in our September Note to quote chapter and verse if he really thought so. In his present article, he

reproduces two quotations from Sister Nivedita's *The Master as I Saw Him*, supplied him by a correspondent. The fun of it is that while there are seven big volumes of the Swami's speeches and writings extant, Mahatmaji brings forward one isolated quotation from another writer (the second quotation is irrelevant) as a proof of our misrepresentation of the Swami. Of course he ends by saying that whether those quotations correctly represented the Swami was more than he could say. But before he even hinted at our misinterpretation, was it not incumbent on him to go through the works of Swami Vivekananda and ascertain the correctness of his charge? We wish we could reproduce enough passages from the Swami here in defence of our position. But want of space forbids us to do so in the present issue. We reserve it for some next number.

By the way, in the same page of *Young India*, in which Mahatmaji so strongly condemns inferentially invoking the authority of great persons, there is a quotation from the Bhagavad Gita in course of another article (*Simplifying Marriage*) by Mahatma Gandhi. This seems to us a curious instance of self-contradiction. But of course we do not see anything wrong in such quotation.

## REVIEW

**VISIONS AND VOICES.** By Amrita. Arya Sahitya Bhawan, College Street Market, Calcutta. 84 pp. Price not mentioned.

A small book of attractive get-up, it gives an original interpretation of the meaning of life and universe in a language at once suggestive and poetic. Here and there a *Sādhaka* may find light for guidance; but as the thoughts of the writer wander too much within the intellectual limits, his words lack the directness of spiritual appeal.

**LIFE AND TIMES OF LOKAMANYA TILAK.** By N. C. Kelkar (Translated by

D. V. Divekar). S. Ganesan, Triplicane, Madras. xi+364 pp. Price Rs. 4/8.

Possessed of sturdy manhood and virile intellect, a profound scholar and a shrewd politician, a patriot whose patriotism stood the fiery test of sufferings on more than one occasion, Bal Gangadhar Tilak had many avenues to reach the heart of his countrymen. Because of his versatile genius he compelled admiration even from his enemies, and it is no wonder that he was almost literally worshipped by many of his admirers.

A good biography of such a personality

was a long-felt want and we are glad that a Madras publisher has brought out one for the English-reading public. The present volume is an English version by Mr. Divekar of an original biography written by Mr. N. C. Kelkar in Marathi. There is no gainsaying that Mr. Kelkar is by far the fittest person to attempt a biography of Lokamanya Tilak, connected as he was with him from as early as 1896 and was his comrade-at-arms in many fights. And as to the faithfulness of the English translation Mr. Kelkar himself bears testimony in the foreword written by him to the volume.

The book does not simply give a chronicle of events, but contains many things which are edifying. In its pages we find many interesting facts which have not appeared in the pages of newspapers. The book gives a picture of the Maharashtra country in the later part of the last century and shows besides how the master-mind of Tilak viewed many years back the problems of female education, social reform, Hindu-Moslem unity, etc.—problems which are no less keen now than they were before. It is interesting to note how Tilak was the unconscious victim of a great conspiracy by which many Maharashtra leaders were led to drink tea in the house of a Christian Missionary. Those were the days of unrelenting orthodoxy and Tilak along with others was threatened with social boycott. Tilak saved the situation by performing penance at Benares. "But if anybody took it into his head to taunt him with it, he was ready to prove that the merest sipping of tea which was only a mixture of milk, water and tea-leaves, called for no such purification." This indicates his attitude towards social reform. "He wanted social reform to evolve itself from within" and was against imposing it on the public.

Tilak's policy represented the golden mean between two extremes. About the Hindu-Moslem problem, as early as 1894, Tilak "steadily continued to din into the public ear the advice not to purchase peace with Mohammedans with dishonour to their own religion or with loss of self-respect." "From time to time he laid down his belief for the guidance of the people that, there could not be co-operation and harmony between two parties unless either was convinced of the necessity of the other for its very life and existence." "There was, in his opinion, a limit to the demands of the minority on the majority and also a limit to the surrender

of the majority to the sentiments of the minority. He did not conceal his view that, even if the necessary consequences would threaten to be somewhat serious, the legitimate rights of the Hindus must be protected." According to the author, "the judgment of history" justifies the above views.

The book contains an additional chapter on "Tilak and the antiquity of the Vedas" from the pen of Prof. Champhekar, which is highly illuminating.

We cannot help mentioning here that though hero-worship is good, we must not pursue it with a fanatical zeal. The book is disfigured, to our great regret, by unseemly remarks against persons who were opposed to the views of Tilak or were his enemies as is here depicted. If anything were to be said against any person, the relevant facts could be stated without any remarks. The thing is more unfortunate as we cannot know from the reading of the book, what the other camp has to say on the points. This attitude is likely to perpetuate bitter feelings in association with a memory which is universally held as sacred. This is, however, a small matter in comparison with the general value of the book.

The present volume narrates events up to 1899 and is the first of a series which is to be completed in three parts. We welcome this book and shall be eagerly expecting those to follow.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA PARAMAHAMSA.  
By K. S. Ramaswami Sastri, B.A., B.L.  
*Sri Ramakrishna Math, Myslapore, Madras.*  
12 pp. Price 3 as.

The book is a nice and concise presentation of Sri Ramakrishna as an Incarnation of Indian Genius. The author gives at the outset a brief life-sketch of Sri Ramakrishna and a small collection of his sayings on soul, *Sādhana*, God and several other subjects. He then carefully examines the nature of his religious practices, realisations and teachings with a view to show how the genius of India fully manifests itself through him. They are characterised by that comprehensive vision, synthetic unity, penetrative insight and assimilative power, which are the essential features of the Indian spirit. His teachings relate to all phases of life, such as individual, domestic, social and purely spiritual. His influence is also Indian in character. It is gentle but effective, potent yet fascinating. His most distinctive contributions to Indian thought

are, as stated by the author, his declaration of the harmony of religions, his proclamation that religion is realisation and his emphasis on the Motherhood of God. Last of all, the author draws a lurid picture of the present state of affairs both in India and abroad and shows that the East as well as the West are in need of Sri Ramakrishna's ministry.

The book will help the English-reading public to view Sri Ramakrishna's life in its true perspective. But a study of Sri Ramakrishna as an Incarnation of Indian Genius cannot be said to be complete, unless it affirms by historico-comparative method that the national genius of India has reasserted itself through him at the call of the hour to meet the requirements of the national life. We have to see how far Sri Ramakrishna's life represents the highest ideal of India and offers a true solution of the problems of the age. If his personality is judged primarily from the universal standard of greatness without particular reference to the times and the nationality it belongs to, the impression left on the mind is generally of a transcendent spiritual figure having no national colour. Perhaps, the book under review has too narrow a scope to be a full treatment of the subject. It contains a handsome portrait of Sri Ramakrishna and is nicely got up.

**KALIDASA.** By Sri Aurobindo. Arya Sahitya Bhawan, Calcutta. 51 pp.

This little master-work of literary criticism is a striking evidence of a philosopher's appreciation of poetic genius. It includes Sri Aurobindo's two valuable essays on (1) The Age of Kalidasa and (2) Kalidasa's Seasons. The first essay is no controversial discussion on the date of Kalidasa, but a vivid estimate of the Poet's creative genius and his place in the cultural history of India. Valmiki, Vyasa and Kalidasa represent three different moods of Aryan civilisation, moral, intellectual and aesthetic, manifested in three successive stages of India's cultural development.

In the second essay the author dwells on the authenticity, the substance and the poetic value of Kalidasa's *Ritusamhāra*. The juvenile work, which, we know, Mallinātha takes no notice of, is rightly described by the author as 'an interesting document in the evolution of a poetic genius of the first rank.' "The prophet of a hedonistic civilisation," writes he, "here seizes with no uncertain hand on the materials of his work. A vivid and virile interpretation of sense-life in Nature, a similar interpretation of all elements of human life capable of greatness or beauty, seen under the light of the senses and expressed in the terms of an aesthetic appreciation,—this is the spirit of Kalidasa's first work as it is of his last." The last and greatest of Kalidasa's works is according to our author, *Kumāra-Sambhava*, the Birth of the War-God. But, according to some authorities it is *Raghuvamsha*.

**THE UNIFYING OF CIVILIZATION.** By G. Davies Watkins, B.Sc. (Economics), F.R.G.S. Christian Literature Society for India, Madras. 165 pp. Price Re. 1/-.

The book contains eight University Lectures on the League of Nations given by the author to the post-graduate and honours students of the University of Madras in 1927-28. The subject is treated under the following headings: (1) the Business of Living Together, (2) the Birth of the League, (3) the Constitution of the League of Nations, (4) the International Labour Organisation, (5) Mandates and the Backward Peoples of the World, (6) the Permanent Court of International Justice, (7) Disarmament, and (8) India and the League of Nations. The book is useful as an introduction to the subject of International polity. There are some illustrative maps and diagrams in it and a bibliography at the end of each chapter. The style is easy and clear. The print and the get-up are good.

In the first lecture the author traces the growth of the International Idea from its early beginning to the present-day stage of development. The League Idea differs from the medieval ideal of super-state for the establishment of international peace. It is far in advance of the theory of the Balance of Power which dominated the world-politics for three hundred years till the end of the 18th century. The progress of science, the extension of commerce and the spread of culture have fostered the international spirit during the last century; and the movement has taken more and more a humanitarian turn. In the second lecture the author shows how the Great War of 1914-18 gives the League Idea a practical shape. The League of Nations came into existence in January, 1920 with the avowed object of putting an end to wars by united human

effort. The author concludes the third lecture with an attempt to answer some criticisms levelled against the League. His examination of them does not go to the root of the matter. In his last lecture the author dwells on India's gains from the League, which, we are afraid, are too poor to justify any enthusiasm.

We cannot be so hopeful of the League of Nations in the matter of world-peace as the author himself is. How can nations which live and grow at the expense of one another, stand on the principles of equity, truth, love and sacrifice in their natural dealings? To our thinking, the League will remain a poor machinery to accomplish its much-advertised object, so long as it will seek to prevent war by manufacturing laws and covenants without trying to elevate individual minds and broaden national outlooks.

**THE ILLUSION OF THE CHARKA.** By Anilbaran Roy. Arya Sahitya Bhawan, Calcutta. 59 pp. Price not mentioned.

We have followed with interest Mr. Roy's vigorous onslaughts on Mahatma Gandhi's Khaddar programme. We approve of all that he says on the subject and we request our readers to peruse the book carefully. Mr. Roy is quite right in thinking that it is Mahatmaji's personality which is blinding the vision of the country in this respect. The point at issue, as the author indicates, is what should be our economic aim. The Khaddar programme tacitly assumes that the condition of our masses cannot be improved much, so the best thing is the plying of the Charka. But the moment we accept that our people also should be as prosperous as other nations, the utter inadequacy of the programme becomes at once explicit, and industrialism and scientific agriculture become necessary. And of course the Khaddar policy is the antithesis of this desired industrialism.

Mr. Roy's arguments are well-nigh irrefutable. The sooner our people break the illusion of the Charka, the better.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### R. K. Mission Flood Relief Work

Secretary, R. K. Mission, writes under date 15th October, 1929:

We are glad to announce that the harvesting of the autumnal rice crop having been finished in the flood-stricken areas of Sylhet and Cachar and labourers finding employment, we have discontinued the relief work in Assam since the 28th September, after distributing rice for two weeks in advance. Hut-construction has also been finished in all the centres.

The relief work in the Midnapur district will be continued up to the end of October.

In Akyab (Burma) the work will go on till December. At present 10,000 people are receiving doles every week. Up to the 20th September 3,000 patients have been treated. We are also distributing fodder. Hut-construction is to commence from this month.

We offer our hearty thanks to all who have helped us to bring the Assam relief work to a successful completion.

### Reception to Swami Madhavananda in Calcutta

A largely attended public meeting to

present an address of welcome on behalf of the citizens of Calcutta to Swami Madhavananda of the Ramakrishna Mission, who had returned from America recently, was held on the 21st October at the Albert Hall, Mr. J. M. Sen Gupta, the Mayor of Calcutta, presiding. The proceedings commenced with music followed by a welcome song and the recitation of a poem. Two addresses, one in Bengali and the other in English, were then read, and the Swami was garlanded and presented with the addresses in a silver casket by the president.

In course of reply to the addresses the Swami said that after going to the West he came to know that Sri Ramakrishna was not only the saviour of India but of the whole world. The message which he had given to the world was not derived from the books or doctrines but from his heart. His message of fellowship and universal brotherhood was not confined to India only but to the whole world. After seeing the religious disputes between the Roman Catholics and Protestants in America, the Swami said, he was convinced that Sri Ramakrishna was not only a great synthesising force of religious differences in India but he would also bring harmony in the whole world. Proceeding the

speaker said that the great Swami Vivekananda had two kinds of messages to give to the world, one for India and another for the West. The people of the West were practically rolling in wealth. But they were eager for peace. The great Swami went to the West and gave them the message of spirituality to satisfy their hunger. In India where poverty reigns and the people had not even ordinary comforts of life, Swami Vivekananda gave them the message of man-making and preached the doctrine of the worship of Daridra-Nārāyaṇa, a new form of worship—the worship of God in many. The Swami continuing said that it had been his impression from the West that education was the only means by which the inner power was drawn out of a man. He also wanted the people of his country to be educated, as without education the masses would not be able to realise the traditions of the land. Time had considerably changed now and interchange of thoughts and ideas between the West and the East was necessary and that could not be done unless the whole country was educated. Speaking about Miss Mayo the Swami said among other things that she had done one good thing, namely, that she had given the widest publicity of the people of India before the whole world. Now the whole world was anxiously looking on India. They should now prepare themselves in such a way that their messages were readily accepted by all. They should not engage themselves in communal or sectarian differences but stand united to give their message of universal brotherhood before the world.

Mr. J. M. Sen Gupta in his speech said that they must follow the message of the Swami to every letter and educate the whole country and thereby drive away the darkness from the country.

#### **R. K. Tapovan Charitable Dispensary, Dharchula, Himalayas**

Swami Anubhavananda, a monk of the Ramakrishna Order, has been engaged in the work of service among the backward hill-people in the interior of the Himalayas for some years. He opened in 1924 a Charitable Dispensary, a report of which from 1924-1928 is to our hand. The utility of the Dispensary is increasing rapidly and it is attracting people from very distant places. The number of patients treated during these four years was 4,580. The

Dispensary is chiefly maintained by the grants from the District Board of Almora and the Medical Board of U. P., the amounts received being Rs. 380/- from the former and Rs. 400/- from the latter annually.

The immediate needs of the institution are workers' quarters and a separate block for the Dispensary with its necessary apparatus and two buildings, one for the indoor hospital and the other for the rest house, at a cost of about Rs. 10,000/-.

Contributions, however small, will be thankfully received and acknowledged by *Swami Anubhavananda, Monk in charge, Sri Ramakrishna Tapovan, P.O. Dharchula, Dt. Almora, U.P.*

#### **R. K. Mission Sevashrama, Rangoon**

We have read with great pleasure the eighth annual report of the above Sevashrama for the year 1928. It is a record of excellent work done. One of the principal events of the year was that the Corporation of Rangoon added two new wards to the Hospital for the treatment of women and children at a cost of about Rs. 21,000, thus extending the usefulness of the institution to the great benefit of the suffering public. During the year the total attendance of patients at the Sevashrama was 1,16,954. All these patients did not belong exclusively to the city of Rangoon, a considerable number of them coming from the suburbs and from some remote districts of Burma. The number of patients admitted in the Indoor department was 1,646; the aggregate of the daily totals of attendance came up to 22,265 and the average daily attendance was 61. At the Out-patients department the total number of attendance came up to 94,689. In the year under review the total receipts including contributions, donations, subscriptions, etc., together with the opening balance of Rs. 2,963-8-0, amounted to Rs. 32,644-2-6 and the total expenditure to Rs. 26,684-10-6.

Any contribution, in cash or kind, however small, will be thankfully received and acknowledged by:—(i) *The President and the Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission, P.O. Belur Math, Dt. Howrah, Bengal;* (ii) *The Imperial Bank of India (Rangoon), Ramakrishna Mission 'Acct., Rangoon, Burma;* and (iii) *Swami Shyamananda, Monk in Charge, Ramakrishna Mission Hospital, Rangoon-East, Burma.*

## R. K. MISSION FLOOD RELIEF WORK

The Secretary, R. K. Mission, writes under date 15-10-29:

We thankfully acknowledge receipt of the following articles as donations for the Flood Relief Work from the 15th June to the 13th October, 1929:

### Cloth

Hazigunj Sevashram, cloth 25 pieces.  
Sj. Lalji Chancharji, Chittagong, cloth 68 pieces.  
Cachar Relief Committee, cloth 200 pieces.  
A Desh Sevak, cloth 407 pieces.  
A Sympathiser, cloth 1 piece.  
Midnapur Sevak Samity, a few old pieces of cloth.  
Thro. Sri Krishna Vidyapitha, Falta, cloth 8 pieces also 2 towels and 2 bundles of old cloth.  
Chandernagar Flood Relief Committee, 200 pieces of old cloth.  
Saroj Nalini Nari Mangal Samity, Basirhat, cloth 1 piece, also 2 bundles of old cloth.  
Calcutta Yuvak Sangha, 1 bundle of old cloth.  
Sj. Ramprasad Mahadeo, Calcutta, cloth 40 pieces.  
Sj. Hazarimal Hiralal, Calcutta, cloth 200 pieces.  
Ramkrishna Satsangha, Satkhira, a few old pieces of cloth.  
Arya Samity, Behala, cloth 13 pieces also 1 piece 36½ yds. long, and 85 old pieces and 15 old garments.  
Ramkrishna Vedanta Society, Calcutta, 2 bundles of old clothes.  
Mazilpur Satsangha, cloth 9 pieces, also 2 bundles of old cloth.  
Sir Gurudas Institution, Narkeldanga, 1 bundle of old cloth.  
Jagaddal Seva Samity, a few old pieces of cloth.  
Students, Nivedita Girls' School, Calcutta, 1 bundle of old cloth.  
Sj. Pashupati Rose, Calcutta, 1 bundle of old cloth.  
Bally Seva Samity, a few old pieces of cloth.

Sj. Sakhi Datta, Salkea, a few old pieces of cloth.  
Sj. N. C. Mustafi, Tufangunj, cloth 4 pieces, also a few old pieces.  
Thro. Sj. N. V. Manohar, Digra, a few old pieces of cloth.  
Thro. Sj. Bijoy Madhav Das, 2 pieces of cloth.  
Sj. Rathindra Nath Sen, Calcutta, 2 pieces of cloth.  
Mr. H. C. Sarker, Calcutta, 2 pieces of cloth.  
Chetla Boys' High School, a few pieces of old cloth.  
Hutmura Yuvak Samity, a bundle of old cloth.  
Mrs. S. C. Roy, Calcutta, one bundle of old cloth.  
Baliati R. K. Mission, 2 bundles of old cloth.

### Rice

Hailakandi Relief Committee, 100 bags.  
Sj. Nitya Gopal Mandal, Dacca, 4 bags.  
Messrs. Karim Chailaji Sarjan & Co., and Ramchurdas, Chittagong, 35 bags.  
Railway Construction Staff, Karimgunj, 10 bags.  
Special Relief Officer, Silchar, 15 bags.  
S. D. O., Karimgunj, 64 bags.  
Karimgunj Congress Committee, 9 bags.  
Thro. Mr. C. Humphry, Asst. Commissioner, Camp, Badarpur, 115 bags.  
Nowgong Relief Committee, 93 mds., also 30 mds. of paddy.  
Silchar Relief Committee, 50 bags.  
Sj. D. P. Chatterjee, Calcutta, 25 bags.

### Other Articles

Cachar Flood Relief Committee, 4 boxes of condensed milk.  
Sadharan Brahmo Samaj, about 1 md. of Alum.

We thankfully acknowledge receipt of the following donations from the 14th September to 15th October, 1929:

Rs. A. P.			Rs. A. P.		
Amount	previously	acknow-			
ledged	...	...			
			29,394	5	0
			R. K. Mission, Barisal	...	25 0 0
			Sj. Satish Ch. Dey, Purnia	...	5 0 0

# Supplement to Prabuddha Bharata

	Rs.	A.	P.		Rs.	A.	P.
Sj. Harendra Nath Singh, Narayanganj ...	10	0	0	Hutimura Yubak Samity ...	18	5	0
Diana Club, Ramkrishnapur ...	10	14	0	Students, Railway H. E. School, Pahartali ...	20	0	0
Dumka Public, through J. N. Mukherjee ...	170	13	0	Sj. Sures Chandra Chakravorty, Patrasayar ...	20	0	0
Ramkrishna Satsangha, Sat- khira (2nd instalment) ...	6	0	0	„ Jyotindra Nath Pain, Ramjibanpur ...	2	0	0
Mr. Satbhai Patel, Guzrat ...	15	0	0	„ Kotiswar Guha, Algi ...	2	0	0
Cachar Relief Committee ...	1,500	0	0	„ Tamasranjan Roy, Santosh	10	0	0
Mr. S. B. Kar, Upper Burma ...	3	9	0	Secretary, T. S., Kharda ...	1	0	0
Sj. Satya Prosad Mallick, Calcutta ...	1	0	0	Secretary, Relief Committee, Netrakona ...	59	14	0
General Secy., Bengalee Asso- ciation, Rangoon ...	150	0	0	Rastriya Stri Sabha, Bombay	600	0	0
Sm. Hemangini Devya, Rangoon ...	4	0	0	Trustees of Bhagirati Bai Janardan Damodar Estate, Bombay ...	51	0	0
Sj. T. C. Chatterjee, Rangoon	1	0	0	Mr. Narayan Gonesh Joshi, Bombay ...	7	0	0
„ Bijoymadhab Das, Mahes ...	62	0	0	Messrs. Muthra Das, Gokul Das, Bombay ...	5	0	0
Head Master, Govt. Normal School, Muzaffarnagar ...	5	0	0	Mr. Binayak Jasabant Kul- karni, Bombay ...	5	0	0
Mr. Bhangoo Singh, Dehra Dun	4	0	0	Dr. Keshab Rao, Bombay ...	5	0	0
Chetla Boys' H. H. School ...	7	12	0	Mr. S. G. Rajadhaksha, Bombay	3	0	0
Professor G. D. Dutt, Ratanganj	0	8	0	„ V. V. Vandarkar, Bombay	3	0	0
Sj. Haripada Dutt, Narsingpur	1	0	0	„ Jashabant Krishna Pra- dhan, Bombay ...	2	0	0
„ Prohlad Ch. Dam, Matha- bhanga ...	2	0	0	Sj. Charu Ch. Basu, Cal. ...	20	0	0
„ Kailash Ch. Ghosh, Khan- janpur ...	10	0	0	Bengalee Community, Bilashpur	23	13	0
Sm. Subba Lakshmi, Vargaher	10	0	0	Sm. Hemmalini Basu, Cal ...	1	0	0
Sj. Kishori M. Ghosal on behalf of Bench Bar and Staff, Serampore Courts ...	778	2	9	Sj. Rathindra N. Sen, Cal. ...	5	0	0
Mr. Srinivas Ayar, Shiyali ...	20	0	0	Non-Official Flood Relief Com- mittee with R. K. Seva- sram, Jamkek ...	876	14	0
Sj. Gour Ch. Mandal, U. Burma	10	0	0	Sj. Kunja Kisore Dey, Kaliganj ...	1	0	6
Through Mr. N. K. Baksj, Simla ...	100	0	0	Ramkrishna Asram, Chaudpur	27	4	0
Sympathisers, Maymyo ...	16	0	0	A Friend ...	1	0	0
Students, Scottish Church College, Calcutta ...	97	0	0	Sm. Maya Debi, Allahabad ...	2	0	0
Mr. H. L. Roy, Bhagalpur ...	3	0	0	Jharia Raj High School, and Boarding ...	4	0	0
Sj. Ashutosh Ghosh, Daltanganj ...	26	12	0	Sj. Rash Behari Laha, Cal. ...	10	0	0
Indian Patriots, Persia ...	124	6	0	Dr. R. P. Roy, Ngape ...	3	0	0
Sj. Paresh Ch. Das Gupta, Dacca ...	20	0	0	Ramakrishna Seva Samity, Ajmirganj ...	5	0	0
Sm. Kunnadini Basu, Calcutta	10	0	0	Mazilpore Satsanga ...	20	0	0
Mr. B. K. Lakshma Goundar, Biklasapuram ...	5	0	0	Medical College Students Club, Calcutta ...	29	0	0
Sj. Ramkrishna Sarkar, Cal.	10	0	0	Flood Relief Committee, Chandernagore ...	100	0	0
Sjs. Jugal Kishore & Phani B. Rudra, Calcutta ...	10	0	0	Bengalee Community, Maymyo ...	6	10	0
Sj. Sashi Bh. Rudra, Cal. ...	2	0	0	Ramakrishna Vedanta Society	12	0	0
„ Pashupati Kumar, Cal. ...	1	0	0				
A Friend, Cal. ...	2	0	0				
Others ...	1	0	0				
Si. Ashutosh Biswas ...	2	0	0	Total ...	35,159	1	0

# Prabuddha Bharata

OR AWAKENED INDIA

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“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत।”

“Arise ! Awake ! And stop not till the Goal is reached.”

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## UNPUBLISHED LETTERS OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

XXII

ENGLAND,  
23rd January, 1896.

. . . I have been smelling something since last few issues of *The Brahma-vadin*. Are you going to join the h—s? This time you simply gave yourselves up. Why, you get in a notice of the h— lectures in the body of your notes. Any suspicion of my connection with the h—s will spoil my work both in America and England and well it may. They are thought by all people of sound mind to be wrong, and true it is that they are held so, and you know it full well. I am afraid you want to overreach me. You think you can get more subscribers in England by advertising C.? Fool that you are.

I do not want to quarrel with the h—s, but my position is entirely ignoring them. . . .

Now I would have no traitors, I tell you plainly, I would not be played upon by any rogue. No hypocrisy with me. Hoist your flag and give public notice in your paper that you have given up all connections with me, and join the . . . camp of the h—s or cease to have anything whatsoever to do with them. I give you very plain words indeed. I shall have one man only to follow me but he must be true and faithful unto death. I do not care for success or no success. I am tired of this nonsense of preaching all the world over. Did any of C.'s people come to my help when I was in England? Fudge! I must keep my movement *pure* or I will have none.

Yours,  
V.

P.S. Reply sharp your decision. I am very decided on this point. *The Brahmanadin* is for preaching Vedanta and not h— . . . . I almost lose my patience when I see these underhand dealings. . . . This is the world—those whom you love best and help most try to cheat you. . . .

## XXIII

BENARES,  
12th February, 1902.

May all powers come unto you! May Mother Herself be your hands and mind! It is immense power—irresistible—that I pray for you, and, if possible, along with it infinite peace. . . .

If there was any truth in Sri Ramakrishna, may He take you into His leading, even as He did me, nay, a thousand times more!

## THE CHRIST WE WORSHIP

BY THE EDITOR

"If I, as an Oriental, have to worship Jesus of Nazareth, there is only one way left to me, that is, to worship him as God and nothing else."—*Sri Sri Vivekananda*.

## I

Christmas is drawing nigh with its celebration of the sacred birth of Jesus, and as usual, many of the *Ashramas* and centres of the Ramakrishna Order as also many Hindu householders will observe the occasion with reverence and devotion. We are not unaware that this catholicity of ours is being misunderstood and misinterpreted in some quarters. The attitude of the Christian missionaries in this matter is well-known. It would not be out of place, therefore, if we write a few words in explanation of our outlook.

Not long ago, a very prominent Hindu gentleman referred to our observation of the birthday of Christ as of other Incarnations and prophets and deprecated it as giving a handle to the enemies of Hinduism. He clearly told us that what we consider as our catholicity is looked upon by many non-Hindus as want of religious conviction. This objection has no doubt some force. There are also other objections. Why do we worship Christ as a Divine In-

carnation? How are we convinced of his Divinity? Or is it a slavish homage to the religion of the ruling race? Will not such worship take away from the distinctions of Hinduism and make it liable to be demoralised? These are questions that require to be properly answered.

We must say that the Christian missionaries in India have done a great disservice to us in this matter. Why we revere Christ we shall explain later on. This reverence of ours has been exploited by the missionaries to prove to the world the growing Christianisation of India. Such a claim is after all foolish. But the result of it has been that many Hindus have stiffened their attitude towards the growing assimilation of Christ into Hinduism, and to that extent Hinduism has been the loser. It is not in this way that the servants of Christ should serve their Master. We shall cite one example. In the early days of the Ramakrishna Order, shortly after the passing of Sri Ramakrishna, the disciples of the Master, those who had already renounced the world and were

living in the monastery at Baranagore, went to the village Antpur and there talked of Christ on the Christmas Eve. We quote from the *Life of Sri Ramakrishna* :

"During the latter part of December, 1886, the members of the Baranagore monastery went to Antpur at the invitation of Baburam's mother. Here Narendra gathered all the young disciples of the Master and in the fervour of spiritual enthusiasm which was evoked here, the bond of fellowship among them was definitely sealed. The enthusiasm reached its height, quite unconsciously, on Christmas Eve, when before a burning log of wood Narendra and his brothers kept vigil, talking passionately of the life of Christ and the glories of renunciation. This stirred up the dormant spirit of renunciation in those who had lagged behind, and shortly after their return, the Baranagore monastery had its full complement of monks, all pledged to a life of the highest asceticism."

This is all that took place. Yet some missionaries have explained it as Christ giving birth to the Ramakrishna Order. One Christian weekly wrote that the Ramakrishna Mission was profoundly influenced by Christianity. Yet when we requested the editor to furnish facts and figures to substantiate his remarks, he observed a discreet silence. The mistake of the Christian missionaries lies in the fact that they observe only one fact and at once jump to a general conclusion. If they note all the facts and influences that have gone to make the Ramakrishna Order, or the mind of the modern Hindus, they will find that Christ is but one of the many influences, and not a very powerful influence for the matter of that. Another mistake is that they often mix up the Western civilisation and Christianity. We have been much influenced by the Western civilisation. But the Western civilisation is not necessarily Christianity. If we strictly analyse the powers that have builded up the Ramakrishna Order, we shall find that the influence of Christian-

ity is infinitesimal. Take *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* in which the daily conversations and movements of the Master are faithfully recorded. How many references are there to Christ or Christianity? Yet it is these divine talks that built up the life of the disciples. And after the passing of the Master, how long did they dwell on Christ? No doubt on some holy days of Christianity they sometimes discussed the life and teachings of Jesus; but so they did of the other prophets and Incarnations. Much is sometimes made of the disciples' and especially of Narendra's attraction for that great book, *The Imitation of Christ*. But they forget in their zeal that the beauty and attraction of the book does not consist in its being written by a Christian monk in his passionate devotion to Christ, but in the fervid expression of love, devotion, self-resignation, humility, renunciation and other such spiritual qualities which belong as much to Christian religious life as to all others. It is the expression of those universal spiritual qualities,—so eloquent, so passionate, so sincere,—that evoked the appreciation of the disciples and they loved this book and still love it. But it should be mentioned that by the time the Ramakrishna Mission was organised by Swami Vivekananda after his return from the West, the *Imitation* was almost entirely forgotten. Says Sister Nivedita in her *The Master As I Saw Him*, "' Silence, all ye teachers! And silence, ye prophets! Speak Thou alone, O Lord, unto my soul!' was, years after a sentence that the Swami quoted at a venture as all that he then remembered of Thomas à Kempis. For it is perhaps needless to say that while this book took its place by degrees amongst experiences remembered, the Gita grew every day in fullness of power and beauty in the minds of these Hindu children of Ramakrishna."

Then there is the most important consideration: the methods of *Sādhana*. The greatest formative influences are these daily practices. How much of

Christianity has been indented into them? *Nothing*. For the methods are all purely Hindu—that is to say, so far as the members are born Hindus and we know that the original disciples were all Hindus, and even now the non-Hindu elements in the membership of the Order is negligible. The daily life that is lived in the monasteries of the Order are purely Hindu, except so far as the general life of India has been influenced by Western culture and institutions. We still worship idols and believe in them. The superstitious scriptures are still holy to us. And our aspiration is still the realisation of that beatific state which has been proclaimed in India from times immemorial as the goal of all life.

How then are we deeply influenced by Christianity? It is not at all our purpose to deny that Christ has cast some influence on us. We revere him as one of the Divine Messengers. And surely that reverence must have its influence. But what we contend is that placed beside the other influences, it is not such as the missionaries claim. Is it not foolishness to say that Christ was the origin of the Ramakrishna Order when we know that Sri Ramakrishna himself had ordained eleven of his disciples as monks and had left instructions with his chief disciple to build up the Order?

As regards our philanthropic works, we must say that the Western methods of organisation have been of much help to us. But the spirit of service had not to be borrowed from any one. Was it not in India that hospitals for even animals had been established in the middle ages? Was not the great Buddha's ideal enough for us, supposing that the Hindu teachings and examples did not suffice? And then, service, love, these can never be learnt from any one. These must awake anew in every heart. The spirit must be there already. Only the expressions and their methods can be learnt.

Some two or three years ago, Mahesh Chandra Ghosh, in course of a review

of a book on the Christ by a Christian missionary, pointed out that there was nothing in the life and teachings of Christ, which was not already in Hinduism. He gave an impressive catalogue in support of his thesis. When the missionaries claim that they are going to fulfil Hinduism by their propagation of Christianity, they must be prepared to receive such answers. We must say, however, that we do not entirely accept Mr. Ghosh's attitude. It is quite true that there is, when analysed, nothing new in Christ's teaching; yet the whole is something unique and as such deserves to be assimilated into Hinduism.

## II

Therefore we say that Christian missionaries are doing a disservice to Hinduism by their extravagant claims when the result of such claims is only a stiffened attitude on the part of the Hindus. For we do want to assimilate the Christ, because to assimilate more and more and to become universal every moment is the fundamental aim of Hinduism. The moment Hinduism will become narrow and limited, it will die. Universality is the very basis of its existence.

This universality and catholicity is often misunderstood as want of conviction and indifference. That is because the ideas of God and religion prevailing among large sections of humanity are often crude and partial. Two facts have to be remembered: It is only in the mystic, superconscious state that we can derive any knowledge of God or the spiritual realities, and that not all, even there, can have the full knowledge of them. We have referred to these points in our September article. The idea of God as formed by the intellect is not the God that our whole being craves to possess. Reason concludes according to the ideas it has been previously moulded by. Our education, prevailing conceptions of the time, social needs and environments, all these contribute to our idea of God. It is the creation of the

intellect and moral consciousness. But in the superconscious state, our whole being is concentrated, it becomes one. And then, the vision of God bursts on it. It is supernatural. The intellect cannot conceive that entrancing vision. We then understand that it is foolish to dogmatise about God. Who knows how He will reveal Himself to us? We feel that there can be no defining of Him. There are those who see only a little of Him. They may make the blunder of thinking that God is all that *they* know. But there are others who see various aspects of Him,—they can no longer be fanatical. It is a misfortune of the Semitic religions that they do not believe in the multiple vision of God. India has been very fortunate in this respect. We have various records of God-vision, describing God in infinite variegation. In India the conviction is deep-rooted that God has various aspects and forms, and that according to one's spiritual tendencies and capacity, one perceives one form or another of God. Those who are "large vessels" may have visions of several aspects of God. But none can say he has exhausted Him. This conviction saves us from yielding to the generalisations of the intellect which would fain stereotype the conception of God according to its background. It also saves us from dogmatism and fanaticism. This conviction makes all the difference between Hindus and non-Hindus in matters of religious outlooks.

It will be seen from what we have said above that we have as a race an innate tendency to look always for more and more of God. The revelation of God is not yet exhausted. We have not known all of Him yet. So we watch. Perchance in other times and countries there have been other revelations that we do not know of. It is quite probable that in future there will be further revelations. So we watch with reverence and welcome in our heart. We cannot make that distinction between one revelation of God and another, which seems so necessary and final to the non-Hindus. These are not two

different Gods, but two expressions of the same Beloved, and in whatever form, He is always the same. Through the many, there is always the One. The charge of the non-Hindus that Hindu catholicity is tantamount to indifference is, therefore, extremely ill-informed and baseless. *Our conception of God differs from theirs, that is all.*

Fortunately, however, this extreme monotheistic tendency of the West is already being called in question. The complete fairness of the Hindu attitude is being appreciated by the better minds of the West. That God is not limited within a single vision is appearing more and more true to them, and they are learning to revere the other revelations. But apart from this, there are other forces at work,—the forces of life itself. The modern civilisation with its emphasis on individual solidarity and uniqueness, and its recognition of the multiplicity of life's expression, is coming to feel, though slowly, that the fulfilment of individuals and of life cannot be through one fixed distinct spiritual form, but that there must be at the end also as much variety as there is now in the middle. It is not a denial of fundamental unity, however. The ideal that is slowly emerging is of unity in variety. The various psychological conditions of the modern times demand the promulgation of a so-called polytheistic religion. Thus Aldous Huxley, one of the most brilliant of modern English essayists, a grandson of the famous Thomas Henry Huxley, writing in an American monthly recently, observes :

"Monotheism and polytheism are doctrines equally necessary and equally true. Man can and does conceive of himself and of the world as being, now essentially many, and now essentially one. Therefore—since God, for our human purposes, is simply life in so far as man can conceive it as a whole—the Divine is both one and many. A purely monotheistic religion is thus seen to be inadequate and unrealistic. . . . If men are ever to rise again from the depths into which they are now descend-

ing, it will only be with the aid of a new religion of life. And since life is diverse, the new religion will have to have many Gods. Many ; but since the individual man is a unity in his various multiplicity, also one . . . It will have to be all, in a word, that human life actually is, not merely the symbolical expression of one of its aspects."

So we Hindus need not be perturbed by meaningless criticism. The tendency of the world is towards accepting our view-point. The time will soon come when people will feel that any fanaticism and narrowness is unbecoming of their dignity. They will feel that it is unnatural to look upon God as giving one revelation only and that there can be no end to our knowing of Him. It is said that Sri Ramakrishna's strongest rebuke to any who would fail to appreciate different revelations of God, was to call him "one-sided." The day will come when every cultured man will feel that to be "one-sided" is a great shame. Fanaticism is often glorified as *Nisthā*, one-pointed devotion or what is called religious conviction. But *Nisthā* is not really fanaticism. An important point of practical religion has to be considered here.

Though the Hindus believe that the revelation of God is endless and diverse, they yet know that in order to raise the mind to the Divine level where alone spiritual realisations are possible, it is necessary to concentrate on one particular aspect of God and pursue it till it is fully realised. We should not take up one aspect to-day and another the next day. Sri Ramakrishna used to explain this point in many different ways : If a man wants to dig a well, he must continue to dig in one place till water has been found. Again, if a man wants to climb to the roof of a house, he may do so in various ways, by means of a staircase, or a rope-ladder, or a bamboo. He, however, must choose one of them and use it till he has reached the roof. If he changes his means again and again he will never reach it. This fixity is called *Nisthā*. It is a necessary limita-

tion. Of course, such as we most of us are, we cannot but accept this limitation in our practical spiritual life. But this acceptance must be earnest and sincere. That is to say, our *Samskāras*, innate tendencies, naturally incline us towards a particular aspect of God. Hinduism fortunately speaks of God in various forms and aspects, and there is thus a wide range of choice. So we choose according to our inclinations. Our whole soul goes to the particular aspect we have chosen, and we try so that our consciousness and life may become moulded to the being of God in that aspect. This is *Nisthā* and *Sādhana*. This is absolutely necessary. [By the way, we must mention that there is also a way by which the mentality may be created, which will be all-inclusive and universal. We spoke of it in our March article. But we admit that that path is yet trodden by few.]

But there is a danger lurking behind this *Nisthā*. It may easily lapse into fanaticism and narrowness. We may, in our zeal, forget that there are other aspects of God equally dear and valid. This danger is obviated by constantly remembering that God is illimitable and that our own chosen aspect is only a part, not the whole, of Him. This recollection will make us humble and open-minded. We shall become more and more catholic. We shall not deny any aspect of God, but shall welcome it with reverence, though our own temperament may not be quite conformable to it. But we must point out clearly that *Nisthā* is quite different from what is generally called religious conviction. Religious conviction presupposes a discrimination between right and wrong religions. We search and find out the true religion and we are convinced. *Nisthā* does not presuppose any such search of the true among the false. All are true, but we choose according to our likes, that is all.

### III

So we need not trouble ourselves much about religious conviction. For

we have *Nisthā*, we know, and our religious outlook is different from that of our critics. And about the fear of our co-religionists that we are unconsciously being influenced by the religion of the ruling race, need we say that it is absolutely baseless? We do not deny that the fear is not unnatural. Subject races have often been thus dominated by the culture and religion of the ruling nations, and their degradation has been inevitable. But in the present case, we cannot say that it is such a domination. We are aware that the cultural aggression of the West in India has been great, and that even now we have not outgrown completely our infatuation for Western ideas and institutions even when they are positively harmful. We have almost lost touch with the soul of India. And it is true there was a time when to become a Christian was considered a height of fashion. But that extreme phase is passed now. We are slowly waking up to the dangerousness of our situation, and the soul of India has already asserted itself, though it may not be quite apparent in all departments of our life. But in so far as *we* are concerned, and we believe there are many others who stand with us, we do not think that our homage to Christ is a slavish one. We stand for Hindu orthodoxy and yet for all that is true and real in other cultures and religions; because orthodox Hinduism is not irreconcilable with catholicity, but is on the other hand synonymous with it. Surely we cannot be accused of imitation and subservience. We see that Hinduism has in its bosom scope for any number of creeds, in fact it wants more and more of them to be of ever greater service to humanity. To recognise Jesus Christ and other alien prophets and to assimilate them and their teaching are, according to us, a fulfilment of our duty to our religion. Especially in the present age, we must remember that Hinduism has a very

onerous task before it. First of all, Hindus must live, and that cannot be unless we become again spiritually aggressive. It has been the privilege and great function of Hinduism to assimilate all new-comers into its fold. It has not done this duty by Islam fully yet, nor by Christianity. This failure is the cause of the great stagnation of life, that has overtaken the Hindu race. We must become active and vigorous again. There must be awakening and movement at the very source and basis of our life, religion. So we must become assimilative again. There is also the question of nation-building in India. We may have a state. But that can at most be secular and will thus fail to touch us to our depths which are religious. A cultural and spiritual unity to be established among the different races of India, the Hindu genius of assimilation must become active again. Other races also must become assimilative of course. But considering the tendencies prevailing among them, it is clear that in this process of unification and assimilation, Hinduism must play the prominent and the essential part. But how can that be if we Hindus become unnaturally conservative and deny room to other religious ideals and methods in our fold, simply because they are alien-born? We must never forget that the task of real nation-building in India is laid essentially on the shoulders of the Hindus. All must unite. But before that we must become universal; we must prepare a hearty welcome for all those who happen to be outside our fold at present. Our welcome should not be like the welcome to the defeated by the conquering hosts. We shall invite equals among equals. They shall come in with all their treasures intact and they shall live among us undisturbed. That kind of catholic atmosphere must be created among us. Remember that if we can accomplish the task of achieving racial unity in



India, we shall solve a great problem for the entire humanity which is now so sorely troubled by racial and cultural conflicts and animosities.

We must not, therefore, be deterred by ill-conceived criticisms of interested persons from accomplishing this great task of assimilation. We must remain faithful to the genius and function of our religion and culture, however misconstrued our actions may be by others.

It may be legitimately asked here: What and whom shall we assimilate? There may also be false religions and false prophets. Are we to swallow all without salt? If we are to discriminate, what shall be the standard of judgment? We admit the questions are important and are not quite easy to answer. But one thing is certain. Assimilation cannot be a sudden precipitate action. It will be a slow process, a transformation from within. That is to say, time which is a great judge of things is always in our favour. We shall know what is true and what false if only we allow some time to pass. And of course, a tree is known by its fruits. Christianity has proved its great worth by the fruits it has borne, so also Islam. There is thus not much doubt left in the human mind about the truth and greatness of Christ and his teaching or about Muhammad and his religion. We may approve or disapprove details. But about the essentials we have little doubt. There would, therefore, be little harm done, if we assimilate them at once. Only about new-fangled ideas should a sceptical attitude be maintained. Many queer ideas are being propagated in the name of religion all over the world. We must wait and see how they fare and what results they produce. And we must allow time to winnow the chaff from the grains. And then we shall see that we are unconsciously assimilating whatever truth there is in them.

But there is another aspect of the question, which requires a more searching enquiry. Are all teachers really Incarnations of God? Is there no difference between prophet and prophet? Should they all receive the same honour from us? We must say that for most of us, the question of distinction between the prophets should not arise. They are so high above us, they are all so great, they have all done such great service to humanity that it is almost churlish to seek to measure them with the standards of our puny understanding. And what honour can we do even to the least of them? The highest tribute that our heart can pay to him is not even one-millionth of what is really due to him. So this question should not arise. But of course it is not quite pointless. Among Hindus, there is the idea that meditation on and worship of Divine Incarnations lead to the realisation of God Himself. We believe that there is no difference between the Incarnations and God. But prophets are not all Incarnations. If we do not know who really are human and who Divine, we may be misled. For there is the other idea that if we worship a prophet who is not a Divine Incarnation, we may achieve some results, but we shall not realise God. So we must know truly who among the great teachers are really Divine Incarnations. It is needless to mention that a categorical reply to this question is not possible. But here again time is a great help. We shall know the tree by its fruits. For *ourselves*, we need not make any secret that we depend essentially on the testimony of Sri Ramakrishna. He stated to his disciples which among the great ones were really Divine Incarnations and which merely prophets. About Christ, his testimony was that he was indeed a Divine Incarnation. How did he know? What was his standard of judgment? There is no doubt that he possessed powers which we cannot

even dream of. And perhaps a probable explanation is not impossible. Every person represents a mode of consciousness. Divinity also represents a state of consciousness. If the perception of a person produces the same state of consciousness as corresponds to the Divine level, we may conclude that the person is really Divine. If, on the other hand, the perception of him evokes a consciousness below the Divine plane, the conclusion is obvious that that person is not a Divine Incarnation. Of course in this test, it must first of all be ensured that the perception itself is a correct one. Hence the testing mind must be absolutely pure, disinterested and unbiased. It is interesting to note here that Sri Ramakrishna did not believe in the beginning in the Divinity of Sri Chaitanya. He considered him as merely a great spiritual teacher. But once he had a vision of him. The experience of that vision convinced him that he was indeed a Divine Incarnation. About Muhammad, he said that he was only a prophet and not a Divine Incarnation.

#### IV

From the above fact is derived an important item of our estimation of Christ. For it is needless to say that our view of Christ is not necessarily the same as that of the orthodox Christians. Orthodox Christians find great significance in the crucified Christ. The crucifixion of Christ has for them a cosmic value; and deep theological truths are considered to lie behind it. The historical Christ is also supposed to prove some cosmic truths, and it is claimed that he has established morality on earth. We confess that we do not possess any expert knowledge of Christian theology. But still, we may be permitted to say how Christ appeals to us. Strange as it may seem, the crucifixion of Christ does not appeal to us much. A learned professor once remarked that the death of Socrates was grander

than that of Christ. Divested of theological interpretations, Christ's death loses much of its glory. It only proves the degraded conditions of the contemporary Jews. If it is considered to show Christ's suffering for the sinning mankind, there is the Hindu belief that all Divine Incarnations are born out of infinite mercy for the suffering humanity and a further crucifixion is not necessary to demonstrate that fact. As regards the historicity of Christ, we beg leave to point out that the eternal truth of Christ does not depend any way on his being historical, but on his being eternal; whether one is eternal or not is known only through mystic awareness and not through historicity. We never bother about the historicity of Krishna or Rama. They may be historical personages. They may not be. It is enough that they are realisable even now in the superconscious state. So about Christ. We are content to know that Christian mystics had his supernal vision. That is the fundamental knowledge and evidence.

As regards the establishment of morality on earth by Christ, as is claimed by some Christians, we have to confess we do not understand it. Did not morality exist before Christ? Or does it not exist where Christianity has not been propagated? A learned English gentleman, John W. Graham, M.A., D.Litt., writing sometime ago in *The Hibbert Journal* on "A Religion for the Educated Indian," remarked:

"One more element must enter in—an urgent and powerful ethical application. Indians can think much better than they can act. In my lecture I urged that the truth of the Divine in Man was incompatible with war, with race hatred, with the degradation of women and with caste. . . . Indians need to learn the value and dignity of truthfulness, the moral anaemia which follows sexual indulgence, the public rottenness of

taking bribes. They need to learn that begging is not a spiritual but a disgraceful way of getting a living. They need to be more public-spirited towards one another and kinder to animals." And some people need to learn that to be silly is extremely ludicrous. It is unthinkable that a sensible man can write the above. It is irresponsible remarks like these that provoke one to enquire about the moral conditions of the Christian nations. Really we do not understand what they mean when they claim that Christ established morality on earth.

These are not, therefore, the elements in the Christ, that appeal to us. Our outlook is different. When Christ says that he is the way, it at once appeals to us. We Hindus are constantly looking for new revelations of the Divine and for the ways to those revelations. If Christ shows a new revelation and provides the way thereto, he is indeed a precious addition to our spiritual ideals and methods. We say that if one is really a Divine Incarnation, the meditation on him will reveal to us God in a new aspect. We want to meditate on Christ; and through that meditation want to forget the world and our finite self, till we are oned with the Divine. We have said before that meditation on any prophet does not lead to God. Christ is a Divine Incarnation, meditation on him is effective. Every form has a corresponding idea behind. The forms of the Incarnations have some Divine aspects behind. Their forms correspond to the Divine alone, to nothing else. Not so the forms of others. God, as we know, has infinite aspects. Naturally, therefore, a Divine Incarnation represents God in one or several of those aspects. If we meditate on him, we shall reach God in those aspects. We consider that Christ represents God in certain aspects. Those who would know God in those aspects can very well take to the

meditation of Christ,—he is the way, the mould,—and they will eventually reach God. So we want Christ. For he is another way. Rama is one way, Krishna is another. So is Christ. It is through the infinite mercy of God that a new way is revealed to men. Such revelations are not plentiful. In several centuries, one way opens. These ways are so rare and precious that only crass thoughtlessness would neglect or deny them. We welcome every new path. That will make our life richer. Christ is the type, the way, and as such he appeals to us most.

We have remarked before that God-vision is a fact of the superconscious state. What effects a Christ produces on the society or the state, are immaterial spiritually. They are too extraneous. The real and essential thing is that he is God Himself. "I and my Father are one." Everything else is unspiritual. Not that we do not appreciate these extraneous implications of Christ. They have their value and interest. But the central interest of Christ for us lies in his being a new way to and form of the Divine. We Hindus classify the various relations of the individual soul with God into six categories: *Sānta* (calm, peaceful relation, the relation of a son to father), *Dāsya* (the relation of a servant to his master), *Sakhya* (friendship), *Vātsalya* (the relation of a mother to her child), *Madhura* (the relation between lovers) and *Abheda* (non-difference, the monistic outlook). It is possible to classify all the Divine Incarnations and the ways proposed by them and other prophets under the above six categories. Christ for us represents the *Sānta* and *Dāsya* ideals. Of these he is a very fine type.

The second thing that impresses us very much about Christ is his absolute purity. Such a pure character the world has scarcely seen. He is the very embodiment of purity. No touch of *Kāmini* (sex) and *Kāñchana* (gold)

is in him. He is above all earthly contamination. Then, there is his great compassion for the suffering men and women. But we do not believe in that peculiar doctrine which believes that whoever would be baptised in the name of Christ will attain salvation. That appears too mysterious to us. Whoever would live up to Christ, would surely attain salvation, because they would become pure and perfect like Christ himself. Salvation cannot be had through any make-shift.

We have tried to indicate our attitude towards Christ. But we must confess that it is only a feeble and a partial attempt and should not be considered as a full presentation of the Hindu attitude towards Christ. We have stressed only the important features. But one thing is certain. Christ is for us only one among many, he is not the one. This point should never be forgotten, for then our attitude will be entirely mistaken. Christ does not seem anything alien to us. As we read the *Gospels*, we feel as if we are watching the career

of one of our own Divine Incarnations. The same urge, the same teaching, the same emphasis on renunciation, the same self-resignation to God. He seems a typical Aryan teacher. That is why Christ appeals to us at once. Not the Christ of the Church but as he emerges from the pages of the Gospels. Our understanding of Christ may not be orthodox. But it has its value. And perchance many who have lost faith in the religion of Jesus Christ as presented by the Christian Churches, may find some light in our understanding of him. Obviously there is a great need of an Aryan interpretation of Christ.

"Our salutations go to all the past prophets, whose teachings and lives we have inherited, whatever might have been their race, clime or creed! Our salutations go to all those God-like men and women, who are working to help humanity, whatever be their birth, colour or race! Our salutations to those who are coming in the future,—living Gods,—to work unselfishly for our descendants!" (Swami Vivekananda).

## THE DIARY OF A DISCIPLE

MIDDLE OF MAY, 1913.

After morning meditation, Swami Brahmananda was sitting in his room at the Belur Math. Some monks and the Disciple were seated before him on the floor. The Swami said:

"Ask me whatever you want to know."

*Disciple*: "Maharaj, how can one be devoted to the Lord?"

*Swami*: "By association with the devotees: you must observe their ways and follow the same in your life. You must put questions to them and resolve your doubts. Merely listening to what they say of their own accord will not do. You must practise continence

(*Brahmacharya*) and *Sādhanā*, otherwise spiritual instructions will not fructify in your life. Merely by reading the scriptures, you cannot grasp their true meaning. Read *Sri Sri Rāmakrishna Kathāmrta* (The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna) and similar other books and try to understand their meaning. The more you will read, the newer and newer will be the import you will discover in them. The *Sādhaka* undertands one way by hearing of God from others, but differently by practising *Sādhanā*, and still more differently by realising God. Nag Mahasay (Durga Charan Nag, a disciple of Sri Ramakrishna) said beautifully: 'What use rowing if the boat is anchored?' This rare human birth is use-

less, if you do not try to realise the Lord. Sankara said that the human birth, the desire for liberation and the shelter of a sage, these occur only to very fortunate souls. Nag Mahasay had another saying: 'It is easy to attain fame, but very difficult to give up. He who can renounce it, is a real *Sādhu*.' "

*A Devotee*: "How can one conquer lust?"

*Swami*: "By repeating His name and by contemplating on Him. Do you understand?"

*Devotee*: "But I could not conquer in any way."

*Swami*: "Then marry. Always reason. Others can accomplish many things, why can you not? You must. Call on Him in whatever ways you like, —meditate on Him, repeat His name, or sing His praise. Do not doubt, do not lose self-confidence."

*Disciple*: "The Master said that one should go into solitude or a secret place and cry unto the Lord. Which should we emphasise,—going into solitude or associating with the devotees?"

*Swami*: "If you meditate in solitude, the mind will easily go inwards, it will be less disturbed by foreign thoughts. But you must always and everywhere associate with the devotees. Until you have advanced a little, you cannot live in perfect solitude. Many have gone mad by seeking absolute solitude prematurely. As I said the other day, one cannot be completely solitary until the mind has been lost in *Samādhi* and God. One benefit of the society of the *Sādhus* is that you can observe their character. You cannot be as impressed by reading book as by observing them. Adhar Ch. Sen (a disciple of Sri Ramakrishna) often used to come to the Master in company with a school sub-inspector. The latter gentleman often used to have a kind of trance. One day a little after they had arrived, the Master went into *Samādhi*. His face was lighted with a divine smile, as if he could not contain the great joy within him. On seeing this, Adhar Babu said to his companion: 'By seeing

your trance, I conceived a disgust for it;—it seemed to suggest a great suffering within you. Can the Divine ecstasy ever cause pain? The blissful ecstasy of the Master has opened my eyes. I would have found it impossible to come here any more, if his trance also had been like yours.'

"A man once visited Trilinga Swami. While returning, he thought that since the Swami did not speak, it was no use going to him. Nevertheless he paid him another visit and sat near him. The Swami suddenly began to cry piteously. Then suddenly again he began to laugh ecstatically. On seeing this, the man thought: 'Oh, what I have learnt to-day I could not gather even from a thousand books. When I shall be as restless for God as when the Swami cried, I shall see Him. And when He will shower His grace on me, I shall enjoy as much bliss as the Swami did when he laughed.' "

*A Devotee*: "The other day you said that it was no use hurrying oneself, that one must wait for the proper hour. Should we then give up yearning for the Lord?"

*Swami*: "I may have said so in another connection. What I meant by 'hurrying oneself' was a temporary fit of restlessness, crying and other outward manifestations. Such fits pass in a few days, and then the man is lost in despair and lethargy and gives up all search for God. As for instance, G. Once he practised much *Sādhana*. But now he has conceived the idea of studying Sanskrit grammar and become a scholar. Perhaps he wants to have fame by talking learned things."

*Disciple*: "The Master said well that if we dig at different places, we cannot make a well and get water."

*Swami*: "Yes, it is so. One must stick on. If the restlessness is due to real love for God, even if one does not realise God, one cannot forget Him. Even if he does not see God for millions of lives, he will still steadily call on Him. Swamiji (Swami Vivekananda) said: 'A little awakening of the Kun-

*dalini* is dangerous.' Unless the *Kundalini* rises to the higher planes, lust, anger and other low passions become very powerful. That is why the *Vaishnava Sādhands* in the moods of a lover or friend are dangerous. Constantly dwelling on the love-relations between Sri Krishna and Sri Radha, they cannot control their lust and are degraded. I know of one who practised this way for a long time, but afterwards married a bad woman. One, therefore, should not in the beginning study books on Sri Krishna's love-relations with the *Gopis*.

"Is it easy to meditate? If you happen to eat a little too much, you cannot concentrate your mind. Meditation is possible, if you can keep lust, anger and all other passions in control. If any of them grows strong, you cannot have meditation. It is easy to buy two pice worth of cow-dung cakes and ignite and sit within them.\* But real *tapasyā* is to restrain the passions and not give them expression. This indeed is the highest *tapasyā*. Do not be cast down if bad thoughts occasionally arise in your mind. Brush them aside."

#### LAST WEEK OF MAY, 1913.

A monk was reading *Sri Sri Rāmakrishna Kathāmrita* (The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna) in the Visitors' Room of the Belur Monastery. In course of the reading Swami Premananda said in reference to Kedarnath Chatterjee:

"Formerly he used to live at Lahore and was a Brahmo. He had deep love for God. One day the thought of not having realised God so pained him that he went to jump from the top of a hill to kill himself. A cowherd boy saw him and said: 'What are you doing?' Thus obstructed he eagerly asked the boy: 'Shall I realise God?' The boy

also said: 'Surely you will.' Kedar took this assurance as from God Himself, and he returned to Bengal.

"While on his way to Calcutta, he by chance got down at Bali and drawn as it were by an invisible force, came to Sri Ramakrishna at Dakshineswar." . . .

*Reader*: "There are two different versions of the meeting of Chaitanya and Rai Ramananda."

*Swami*: "Why should you believe everything? Believe only in the authoritative books. . . . You must have great strength of mind."

The Swami sang:

"Oh Mother, if I but die with Thy holy name on my lips, then must Thou save this helpless child of Thine.

"I care not if I have killed the sacred cow or the holy Brahmin, or even the child in its mother's womb. O, I care not if I have sinned by drinking, or even by killing a woman.

"In spite of these darkest sins, I know I can verily become Brahman, if I but die with Thy holy name on my lips."

"But you must not infer from this that you are to sin now and take the name of the Mother at the dying moments. Unless you repeat Her name even now with great faith and strength of mind, you will not even remember it at the moment of death.

"The essence of Sri Ramakrishna's teaching is that one should give up all pride and egoism. A little meditation is no good. God cannot be realised through such lukewarm moods. One must yearn deeply, one must become restless.

"Just as the Lord has covered us with His *māyā*, He also graciously incarnates Himself and practises *Sādhana* in order to show how we are to rend asunder the *māyā*. He Himself is also breaking the creations of *māyā*. A man once went to a garden with his several sons. The sons played about. Some plucked flowers, some plucked green cocoanuts, but one went to angle in the tank. When it was evening, the man called all his sons. All came except the one who was fishing. The father

\*This is a kind of austerity called *Pancha-tāpāh*. Four fires are burnt in four corners,—sometimes a complete circle of fire is also made,—and one sits in the centre meditating or repeating *mantrams*, while the sun burns overhead. Thus passes the whole day. This practice is sometimes continued for days together.

sent for him again and again but he would not come,—he was deeply absorbed in catching fish. When it was quite dark, the father himself went, broke the fishing rod to pieces and

dragged the boy to the carriage. Thus does the Lord come from time to time, shatters our playthings and drags us on to Him."

## THE BRAHMACHARYA SYSTEM OF EDUCATION

BY PRAMATHA NATH BOSE, B.Sc. (LONDON)

There is no statement more common in the West and in Westernised India than that India has hitherto not been a nation, but a mere heterogeneous congeries of races, sects and creeds, and that she is just now in the birth-throes of nationhood under Western influence. To my mind, the reverse of this statement is true. India has hitherto been a nation which is now being disintegrated. But the bond of Indian nationhood was primarily cultural, not political. Our Western and Westernised friends who attach what we consider to be inordinate importance to politics and consider the political to be the main if not the sole bond of nationhood, have this fact in view when they talk of building up an Indian nationhood. The truth is, the soul of Indian civilization lay in the village, and with real, substantial village self-government, the people were more or less independent of the Central Government. India's cultural empire was not confined to India, but extended nearly all over Asia and penetrated even to America. It was won and maintained not by physical, but by psychic force.

India suffered repeated invasions from outside by the Greeks, the Parthians, the Scythians, the Huns, etc., who succeeded in establishing their authority in various parts of the country. Sooner or later, however, they were either expelled or became Hinduised, adopting the Hindu religion (or its offshoot Buddhism), the Hindu literature and the Hindu institutions. The incursions and invasions of the Mahomedans for a time exerted a disintegrating influence

upon Indian nationhood. But Hindu culture ultimately succeeded not only in opposing it, but also in capturing the Moslem mind and strongly influencing Moslem culture and Moslem administration. In fact, settled in India, the Mahomedans gradually became more or less Hinduised to such an extent, indeed, that several Mahomedan Emperors forbade the killing of cows. On the other hand, Mahomedanism exerted a wholesome influence upon Hinduism. It was this influence which produced that galaxy of earnest reformers, Ramana-  
nanda, Kavir, Ruhidas, Nanak, Chaitanya, etc., who shed such lustre on medieval India. The result of this wholesome action and reaction between Hinduism and Mahomedanism was a strong spirit of sympathy and amity, which served to incorporate the Moslems into the Indian nation and they fraternised with the Hindus on several important occasions as during the Sepoy War.

India's cultural Swaraj which made her people as happy and prosperous as it is possible to be for any considerable section of humanity, continued up to the earlier years of British Rule. Sir Thomas Munro, despite his natural Western bias, declared a century ago, that "if a good system of agriculture, unrivalled manufacturing skill, a capacity to produce whatever can contribute to either convenience or luxury, schools established in every village for teaching reading, writing and arithmetic, the general practice of hospitality and charity among each other, and above all a treatment of the female sex full

of confidence, respect and delicacy are among the signs which denote a civilized people,—then the Hindus are not inferior to the nations of Europe and if civilization is to become an article of trade between England and India, I am convinced that England will gain by the import cargo."

It is noteworthy, as the writer has shown in his *Epochs of Civilization*, that only two civilizations of antiquity have survived to the present day, the Chinese and the Indian, and that they both had cultural Swaraj. China, like India, suffered repeated invasions from outside, and they both had the capacity of absorbing the foreign elements into the substance of their civilization.

Now, for the first time in her history, India has suffered cultural subjugation, which, on the whole, has proved far more disastrous than political subjugation. In fact, it would probably be no exaggeration to say that the destiny of India in recent times was decided not by the result of the battle between Siraj-u-dowla and Clive in 1757, but by that of the battle between the Orientalists and the Anglicists in 1835.

There is a fable that on the birth of the son of a mighty personage, all the fairies were invited to his cradle except one, and they were all very profuse in their gifts. The uninvited fairy came last in great dudgeon. But unable to reverse what her sisters had done already, she mixed a curse with every blessing they had conferred. From my experience of over three score years, I find the moral of this fable illustrated in most, if not all, of our sublunary blessings, and that the curse in some cases outweighs the blessing. English education is one such. That its rapid spread since 1835 has done some good is unquestionable. It has relaxed the severe restraints of authority and of conventionalities sanctioned by immemorial usage. Literary ambition has a freer scope and has been soaring into regions hitherto unknown in India. The Indian intellect has ventured out of the well-beaten paths of theology

and metaphysics. Various branches of natural science, biography, novel (in its modern sense), archæology, and philosophy are subjects almost new in modern Indian literature. In the social sphere also, many evils that had crept into Indian society have been removed.

But the benefits thus conferred are overwhelmingly countered by the evils resulting from the extreme pro-Western bias of the average English-educated Indian or Neo-Indian as he may be conveniently called. He regards the methods and ideals of the modern culture of the West to be so superior to those of the Indian as to render their propagation to be a boon and a blessing, and eagerly pursues the path of Western civilization as the right path of progress and reform. He has become more or less an automaton, moving, acting and talking much as the Occidental would make him do. Nothing passes with him which has not the hall-mark of Western approval. He merely echoes the views and shibboleths of the Westerner and does it with the zeal of a neophyte.

Natural science is the intellectual foundation of modern culture as mental science is that of ancient culture whether Indian, Chinese, Egyptian or Greek. The ancients subordinated science to philosophy. The moderns, on the other hand, elevate science above philosophy. The modern scientists would practically resolve all knowledge into sensations, would not admit anything which is not susceptible of experimental demonstration and scrupulous verification, would exclude the ultrasensible region from their purview altogether. The ancient philosophers, on the other hand, not only did not exclude it from their purview altogether, but invested it with an importance far above that of the sensible universe. The subordination of the animal to the spiritual wants of life made the ancients seek happiness through the inner rather than the outer man, by self-denial rather than by self-indulgence, by suppressing sensual desires rather than by gratifying them.



The present-day Westerners, on the other hand, subordinating the spiritual to the animal wants of life, seek for the well-being of man through the outer rather than the inner man by perpetually provoking and feeding his sensual desires, by ceaselessly multiplying his animal wants, by eternally inventing means for gratifying them. Apart from the obviously fallacious character of this principle, it does not need much thought to perceive that upon its propagation depends the prosperity, nay, in some cases even the very existence, of the Westerners, for it enables them to exploit the weaker and the industrially backward peoples (in the modern sense) of Asia and Africa. Indeed Macaulay, when he advocated the cause of English education, had the foresight to predict that it would train up a "class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect," and that it would increase the number of customers for English manufactures. Yet the principle of "wanting more wants" which underlies the modern industrial civilization of the West, has been enthusiastically adopted in New India, and its propagation there is largely responsible for the decay of the indigenous industry of India. Indeed by fostering a taste for an infinity of inutilities, futilities and fatuities it has proved not only an economic, but indirectly also a moral, menace. The Occidental naturally enough from his view-point regards the sparsely clad Indian of simple habits living in the style of his forefathers, as but little removed from a barbaric condition. His Indian disciple forthwith pleads for a "rise in the standard of living" after the English fashion oblivious of the vast economic gulf between his country and England, forces up the demand for drapery and all the tawdry paraphernalia of Western civilization thousandfold, and thus adds fresh links to the ever lengthening change of our industrial slavery, and swells the volume of an exhausting

economic drain which is one of the main causes of our recent impoverishment and consequently of our physical degeneration. The Neo-Indian does not pause to consider whether this so-called "rise" adds to our social efficiency, whether it does not rather diminish it—materially by attenuating to the vanishing point our meagre margin between sufficiency and privation, and morally by inordinately enhancing the stringency of the struggle for animal existence, and thereby leading to the propagation of the vicious cult of "Can I kill thee or canst thou kill me," and the consequent diminution of that spirit of benevolence and of social service which has long cemented our society together, and to various other ethical obliquities.

Then again, obsessed by a strong bias in favour of the modern type of Western democracy, the Neo-Indian has been utterly heedless of the indigenous form of democracy, the village self-government (not the sham which passes under that name) which to our mind is much more rational, and which from time immemorial was the basis of Indian polity. It kept the nation together despite the divisions of creed and caste, and despite the occasional misrule of tyrannically and viciously disposed despots; and its annihilation is the saddest, the most tragic fact in the history of British India. Yet hardly any voice has ever been raised against it in New India. Further, our political leaders have been seeking to infuse into our people the Western national spirit, and as the principal step thereto, striving for unity in the Western sense, which does not necessarily imply amity. It has been achieved and maintained by measures which are distinctly detrimental to communal concord. The evils of the Hindu-Moslem Pact, entered into by the Indian National Congress at Lucknow, have been of a very far-reaching character. Mr. Montagu and Lord Chelmsford in their anxiety to build up an Indian nationhood increased the

apple of communal discord thrown by the Lucknow Pact to an orchardful. Their Reform Scheme has plunged our people into the vortex of modern politics with but little of its good, and with all its evil, to which is to be added the special one of communal representation. The Lucknow Pact led to the Pact which the Swarajists of Bengal entered into subsequently in their frantic efforts for the maintenance of Hindu-Moslem amity. It adumbrates the preposterous principle that not only representation on the Legislative bodies and District Boards and Municipalities, but State appointments also should be proportionate to the numerical strength of the different communities—a principle better calculated to exacerbate communal antagonism. A principle less conducive to abiding national solidarity and to the best interests of Swaraj worth having could hardly be conceived. No doubt the political leaders are under the impression that on the advent of Swaraj they are striving for, the communal jealousies and dissensions would disappear. But alas, politics has not yet discovered an alchemy which by pandering to the base leaden impulses of human nature can transform them into the golden ones of self-sacrificing duty and broad-minded patriotism. The present tension between the higher and the lower castes among the Hindus, and between caste Hindus and the "untouchables" is only a degree less acute than that between the Hindus and the Moslems. Hitherto our reformers from the time of Gautama Buddha down to that of Ramakrishna Paramahansa have endeavoured to remove the barriers of caste and minimise its hardships and disabilities. But they did so without antagonising the different classes and creating communal dissension. What they strove for was equality in the ethical and spiritual plane which fostered amity and concord.\* On the

other hand, the great majority of the present-day reformers of New India, obsessed by the Western superstition of equality, adopt methods of uplift in the material plane, which foster dissension and discord where formerly there was harmony and good feeling. I must say there are among the leaders of New India many self-sacrificing patriots of great parts, and that they have done some good is unquestionable, especially by way of the propagation of the Swadeshi, and more particularly the *Khaddar* cult. But I am constrained to say that the evils they have wrought owing to their extreme pro-Western bias outweigh the good they have done. Indeed, the longer I live, the more fully I am persuaded, that it is not our ignorance of hygiene and our social evils, but our purblind pursuit of the paths of Western civilization that is accountable for many, if not most, of our present-day troubles and tribulations.

How to counteract the evils of the present system of state and state-aided education which I have briefly sketched is the problem which has been exercising the minds of some of our intelligentsia, who are not hoodwinked by the meretricious glamour of modern civilization during the last three decades. I must say that the great majority are still so infatuated with it that, though no agency more ingeniously and more dexterously forges links for our bondage, they rend the skies for its extension and for the expansion of a department which may more appropriately be called nation-destroying than nation-building. But in the present conflict of culture, the forces on the side of our culture have been increasing. The Gurukulas started by the Arya Samaj, the Visva-bharati of Bolpur, the Deoghar Vidyapith of the Ramakrishna Mission and the Brahmacharya Vidyalaya of Ranchi are some of the more conspicuous among them.

I have for over two decades been an advocate of the Brahmacharya system, not because it is national, but because it is a system which would be bene-

\* The writer has dealt with this subject in his work, *Some Present-day Superstitions*, Chapter III.

ficial for the whole world. There are unmistakable signs of moral degeneration all over the civilized world. There is a plane of contact in which the sages of the West meet those of the East. Herbert Spencer is one of them. Writing in the beginning of the current century he concludes a remarkable article on *Rebarbarization* with the following significant words:

"Thus on every side we see the ideas and feelings and institutions appropriate to peaceful life replaced by those appropriate to fighting life. In all places, and in all ways, there has been going on during the past fifty years a recrudescence of barbaric ambitions, ideas and sentiments, and an unceasing culture of blood-thirst. If there needs a striking illustration of the result, we have it in the *dictum* of the people's Laureate, that the 'Lordliest life on earth' is one spent in seeking to 'bag' certain of our fellowmen."

The Empire of Enmity and Discord has been spreading and that of Amity and Concord has been contracting. The cult of "each for himself and devil take the hindmost" has been permeating all sections of the community in a way it never did before. The conflict between Government and people, between class and class, between men and women, and between individual and individual has everywhere been gaining in volume, in intensity and in animosity. The craven spirit of commercial greed is running riot all over the "civilized" world. Human vultures gloat over the big profits made by exploiting the helpless sections of humanity. Individual freedom even among the so-called free nations of the world is diminishing, and man is becoming a mere cog of the great state-wheel. Further proof of degeneration is afforded by increase in crimes, in divorces, in venereal diseases, and in the number of insanes and suicides. Frederik Harrison said, in an interview published in *The Times* sometime ago, that "The boom in education has not brought any nobler literature, any

greater art, any purer drama, any finer manners. Serious literature is being choked out by the increased cost of printing, the abolition of a leisured class able to study in peace and to produce from its learning, and by the mad whirl of modern existence. The result of this chaos in spiritual and moral training is a manifest loosening of the canons of moral life, the defiance of discipline by the young and ambitious, the mockery of age and all the lessons of age; worst of all the sacrifice of family as a moral institution, and the degradation of marriage to be a temporary partnership entered into as a frivolous mode of getting a 'good time' and to be cast off as easily as a lodging which is not convenient." The effect of "education" upon the proletariat has been tersely described by John Stuart Mill as only a craving for "higher wages and less work for the sake of more sensual indulgence."

There is no doubt that the domain of knowledge has been expanding widely and rapidly, but there is equally no doubt that the domain of wisdom has been contracting. There are not a few at the present day who, if they are thoughtful and introspective, would exclaim with Faust:

"Alas! I have explored  
Philosophy and Law and Medicine  
And over deep Divinity have pored,  
Studying with ardent and laborious zeal;  
And here I am at last, a very fool,  
With useless learning curst  
No wiser than at first."

The Westerners have piled up a colossal, overwhelming mass of literature bearing upon an infinity of topics. But it pertakes of the nature of a gigantic labyrinth, in the intricate and bewildering mazes of which one is apt to get lost without any light that would point out a rational goal of life and help one to attain it.

In regard to the inefficiency of the current system of education, whether in the West or in New India, so far as moral development is concerned, which is of much greater importance than

mere intellectual development, Herbert Spencer rightly observes that "Scarcely any connection exists between morality and discipline of ordinary teaching. Mere culture of the intellect (and education usually conducted amounts to little more) is hardly at all operative upon conduct. . . . Intellect is not a power but an instrument, not a thing which itself moves and works, but a thing which is moved and worked by forces behind it. To say that men are ruled by reason is as irrational as to say that men are ruled by their eyes. Reason is an eye—the eye through which desires see their way to gratifications. And educating it only makes it a better eye—gives it a vision more accurate and more comprehensive—does not at all alter the desires subserved by it. Probably some will urge that enlightening men enables them to discern the penalties which naturally attach to wrong-doing, and in a certain sense it is true. But it is only superficially true. Though they may learn that the grosser crimes commonly bring retribution in one shape or another, they will not learn that the subtler ones do. Their sins will merely be made more Machiavellian. . . . Did much knowledge and piercing intelligence suffice to make men good, then Bacon should have been honest and Napoleon should have been just. . . . It is indeed strange that with the facts of daily life before them in the street, in the counting house, and the family, thinking men should expect education to cure crimes."

These words of one of the greatest sages of modern times were never truer than they are at the present day. It is the propagation of the Brahmacharya system of cultural education that can rescue humanity from the welter of destitution, disease, vice and malevolence, in which it has of late been sinking more and more deeply. The principles which underlie it, renunciation and universal all-embracing benevolence, are among the eternal verities. They hold good to-day as they did some three to four thousand years ago when

they were preached in India and China. Not that the mass of the people should renounce the world and it is not desirable that they should do so, but the noble examples of the genuine Sadhus serve as an inspiration in observing the Brahmacharya discipline of self-help, simple living and selflessness in a way which no amount of preaching would do. And without simple life and self-abnegation genuine altruism is not possible. The West also preaches altruism, but simultaneously preaches the cult of self-indulgence euphemistically called "elevation of the standard of living" which is utterly antagonistic to it. The Hindu sages are often characterised as unpractical dreamers. But using the term practical in a broad long-sighted sense, I venture to think the charge has no foundation in fact. And their practicalness has been exhibited in nothing so much as in the way they sought to inculcate the basic principles of their pedagogics. Instead of depending upon copy-book maxims, sermons and precepts, they ordered daily life so that the fundamental principles of their culture might be ingrained in the constitution. The methods prescribed by them are Brahmacharya (which inculcates selflessness and simple life), Bhuta Yajna (which fosters kindness towards animals), Manushya Yajna (which promotes the love of man) and Sandhya (which secures mental equipoise and tranquillity). The moderns despite their much-vaunted "progress" have not yet discovered any better methods.

Benevolence has from remote antiquity been recognised as the basic principle of morality. As long ago as B. C. 2435, the Chinese Emperor Kuh taught that no virtue is higher than to love all men. Gautama Buddha in India and Lao-tze in China and Jesus Christ five hundred years after them enunciated the noble ideal: "Recompense evil with good." It is self-sacrificing benevolence that binds the different classes and nations together and directs the forces making for material

progress to beneficent channels. Such as lead to the abiding welfare of mankind, and the propagation of the Brahmacharya method of cultural education would be the most effective way of promoting it, in the East as well as in the West. Benevolence is of

such supreme, paramount significance to humanity, that without it such present-day movements and institutions like Socialism and the League of Nations are either mischievous or useless, and with it, they are more or less superfluous.

## THE CALL OF THE DISCIPLES\*

By ROMAIN ROLLAND

It is easy to see what India gained from the meeting of Ramakrishna and the Brahmo Samaj. His own gain is less obvious, but no less definite. For the first time he found himself brought into personal contact with the educated middle class of his country, and through them, with the pioneers of progress, and Western ideas. Previously he had known practically nothing of their mentality.

He was not the man to react like a strict and narrow devotee who hastens to put up shutters of his cell. On the contrary he flung them wide open. He was too human, too insatiably curious, too greedy for the fruit of the tree of life not to taste also of these to the full. His long searching glance insinuated itself, like a creeper through the crannies of the house, and studied all the different dwelling places of the same Host, and all the different spirits inhabiting them. In order to understand them he identified himself with them. He grasped their limitations as well as their significance and proportioned to each nature its own vision of life and individual duty. He never dreamed of imposing on any man either vision or action alien to his proper nature. He, to whom up to that time and for the rest of his life as far as he personally was concerned, re-

nunciation was the first and last word of truth, discovered that the majority would have none of it and he was neither astonished nor saddened by the discovery. The differences men busied themselves to raise between them like hedges seemed to him nothing but bushes flowering in the same field giving variety to the scene.<sup>1</sup> He loved them all. He could see the goal and the path assigned to each one of them, and pointed out to each the road he was to follow. In speaking to an individual one of the things most astonishing to the on-lookers was the way he instantaneously adapted just his particular turn of phrase and method of expressing his thoughts. This was not mere versatility. His spirit kept firm control of the steering wheel, and if he led men to another point on the bank, it was always the bank of God. He helped them un-awares to land by their own power. He held that all nature was of God and hence that his duty was to guide each nature along its own lines so that it might attain its fullest development. The realisation that he possessed this gift of spiritual guidance came upon

<sup>1</sup> Somebody once asked him what difference there was between the Brahmos and the other Hindus. "No very great one," he replied. In a concert of hautboys one holds on the same note while the others weave variations beneath it. The Brahmos always come back to the same note,—the formless aspect of God. But the Hindus play His different aspects.

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him without his own volition. A Western signal, adopted as its motto by the Italian Renaissance, claimed that "To will was to be able." This was the beautiful bragging of youth with everything still to do. A more mature man, who is not so easily satisfied with words, but who lays emphasis on deeds, alters the flag so that it reads: "To be able is to will."

Ramakrishna suddenly perceived the power within him and the call of the world to use it. The ascendancy he exercised over some of the best minds in India revealed the weaknesses and the needs of these intellectuals, their unsatisfied aspirations, the inadequacy of the answers they gained from science, and the necessity for his intervention. The Brahmo Samaj showed him the strength of organisation,—the beauty of a spiritual group, uniting young souls round an elder brother, and making a joint offering like a basket of love to their Beloved, the Mother.

The immediate result was that his mission, hitherto undefined, became crystallised; it concentrated first in a glowing nucleus of conscious thought wherein decision was centred, and then passed into action.

First of all he saw in their entirety his own relations with God. He saw that this God within him<sup>2</sup> could not be

satisfied with personal salvation, as was the case with other Sādhakas, but required of him the love and service of mankind.<sup>3</sup> His spiritual struggles, his ecstasies, his realisations were not to be only for his own profit.

"Sic vos non vobis. . ."<sup>4</sup>

They were meant only to prepare the way for human development, for a new era of spiritual realisation. Other men had the right to aspire to and hope for liberation, but not he. He could not count on that. From century to century he was obliged to go to the help of mankind whenever they were in danger.<sup>5</sup>

And this was the rallying cry, the word of salvation that he was to carry to the men of his day:<sup>6</sup>

1. All religions are true in their essence and in the sincere faith of their believers. The revelation of this universal truth, whereat Ramakrishna arrived by common sense as much as by intuition, was the special object of his coming upon the earth.

2. The three great orders of metaphysical thought, Dualism, "modified" (or mitigated) Monism and Absolute Monism, are the stages on the way to supreme truth. They are not contradictory, but rather when added the one to the other are complementary. Each is the perspective offered to the mental standpoint of one order of

<sup>2</sup> Ramakrishna admitted at this point what the Bhairavi Brahmani had been the first to proclaim—that he was a Divine Incarnation. But he disliked to talk about it, and could not bear it to be mentioned in front of him. In general, praise was disagreeable to him. He was much more prone to refuse in public all spiritual privileges, to the dissatisfaction of some of his followers, who would have liked a share in them. His conviction lay in an inward act, a secret light, which he never paraded. I would ask my Western readers a question that may shock them—whether the passionate conviction of a mission imposing thought and action upon our great men is not vaguely akin to exactly some such intuition, some fullness of Being transcending the limits of personality. What does it matter by what name it is called?

<sup>3</sup> The word "service" written by Ramakrishna's disciples above their Mission was not explicitly pronounced by the Master. But his whole doctrine of love working for others to the limits of personal sacrifice is in essence the doctrine of service. Service, as Swami Ashokananda has well shown, is its motive force (Cf. *Prabuddha Bharata*, Mayavati, Almora, February, 1928, *The Origin of Swami Vivekananda's Doctrine of Service*). We shall return to this question in the next volume.

<sup>4</sup> A frequently quoted verse of Vergil, meaning: "You work, but not for yourself."

<sup>5</sup> As a curious fact I note here that Ramakrishna said, pointing to the north-west, that after two hundred years he would be reincarnated there. (Russia?)

<sup>6</sup> *Life of Sri Ramakrishna*, pp. 342—347.

individuals. For the masses, who are attracted through the senses, a dualistic form of religion with ceremonies, music, images and symbols is useful. The pure intellect can arrive at mitigated Monism; it knows that there is a beyond; but it cannot realise it. Realisation belongs to another order, the Advaita, the inexplicable, the formless Absolute, of which the discipline of Yoga gives a foretaste. It surpasses the logical means of word and spirit. It is the last word of "Realisation." It is Identity with the One Reality.

3. To this scale of thought there is naturally a corresponding scale of duties. The ordinary man lives in the world and can and does fulfil his duties there, striving with affectionate zeal but without attachment to self, just as a good servant who takes care of a house, knowing perfectly well that the house is not his. By purity and love let him achieve liberation from his desires. But only step by step with patience and modesty.

"Undertake only those tasks that are within the range of your thoughts and purified dreams. Do not flatter yourself that you can do big things, but fulfil duties as small in size as your self-renunciation to God. Then as your renunciation and purity grow (and things of the soul grow very quickly) they will pay their way across the material world and shed their light upon other men, just as the Ganges, having cut its channel through the hard rocks of the Himalayas, waters millions of places with its beneficence."

"Do not be in a hurry, but progress each at his own pace! You are sure to arrive at your destination, so there is no need to run! But above all do not stop! 'Religion is a path which leads to God, but a path is not a house.' . . . 'And will it be a long one?' 'That depends. It is the same for all. But some march for a longer time and the end draws near. . . .'"

<sup>1</sup> Cf. D. G. Mukerji, *op. cit.*

"The potter dries his pots in the sun. Some are already baked, others not. The cattle pass and tread them under foot. (Then comes death) . . . The potter picks up the pots again and if one is not quite baked he replaces it on the wheel; he does not let it go. But when the sun of God has completed your baking, the potter leaves the remains, now of no further use on the plane of Mâyâ, except for one or two finished vessels to serve as models for humanity."

Ramakrishna was one such, and his mission was to seek those who were a stage behind him<sup>9</sup> and with them, in fulfilment of the Mother's will, to found a new order of men, who would transmit his message and teach it to the world—his word of truth containing all the others. This word was "Universal"—the Union and Unity of all the aspects of God, of all the transports of love and knowledge, of all forms of humanity. Until then nobody had sought to realise more than one aspect of the Being. All must be realised. That was the duty of the present day. And the man who fulfilled it by identifying himself with each and all of his living brethren, taking to himself their eyes, their senses, their brain and heart, was the pilot and the guide for the needs of the new age.<sup>10</sup>

No sooner had he perceived this vision than he was afire with the desire to realise it.<sup>11</sup> Like a bird-charmer he flung a passionate appeal into the air to other winged spirits to come and group themselves round his dovecote. The time was ripe. He could wait no longer. He must collect his covey

<sup>9</sup> Interview with Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, December 6, 1884.

<sup>10</sup> He said: "to those who are in their last birth."

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Swami Ashokananda, *loc. cit.*

<sup>12</sup> It was revealed to Sri Ramakrishna about 1868 that many faithful and pure-hearted souls would come to him. (Cf. *Life of Ramakrishna*, p. 203). But Ramakrishna had hardly given it a thought before

round him. Night and day the thought of these beloved companions possessed him. He cried in his heart. . . . .

"My ardent desire knew no bounds. That very day for good or ill I had to realise it. I no longer listened to what was said round me. . . . They filled my mind. I could see them. I decided in advance what I should say to this one and that one. . . . By the end of the day the thought of them weighed upon me. . . . Another day had gone and still they had not come! . . . . The clocks struck, the conches sounded. I went up onto the roof in the fading light and with bleeding heart cried aloud, 'Come, my children! Where are you? I cannot live without you. . . .' I loved them more than mother, friend or lover, I desired them; I was dying in their absence."

This mighty cry of the soul soared up into the night like the sacred serpent; and its attraction was exerted over the winged spirits. From all directions, without understanding what command or what power constrained them, they felt themselves drawn, caught by an invisible thread; they circled, they approached and soon one after the other they arrived.

The first disciples to present themselves (this was in 1879) were two middle class intellectuals from Calcutta.

1866. According to Saradananda, it was at the end of the long Samādhi of that year that a violent desire for his future disciples came upon him. Every evening he prayed for their advent with loud cries. The climax of this crisis was towards the end of the next six years (1866—1872), which further period was necessary for Ramakrishna to reach the height of his powers as a teacher, and to understand the spiritual condition of the India of his age. Towards the close of this period in a vision his future disciples appeared to him. (Cf. *Life of Vivekananda*, I. 360). He first began to preach at the end of 1874 or the beginning of 1875, when he made Keshab's acquaintance. His preaching may be reckoned as falling within the period of twelve years from 1874 to August, 1886.

They were cousins: the one a medical student at the Calcutta Medical College, an absolute materialist and atheist: Ramchandra Dutt; the other married and the head of a family: Manomohan Mitra. Some lines in a Brahmo Samaj journal mentioning Ramakrishna had struck their attention. They came and they were conquered. They did not renounce the world and Ramakrishna did nothing to detach them from it; but the extraordinary man captivated them by his charm and his character. It was they who brought him his two greatest disciples—the one who became the first abbot of the Ramakrishna Order, under the name of Brahmananda (Rakhal Chandra Ghosh), and he whose genius was to enlighten India and the whole world under the name of Vivekananda (Narendranath Dutt).

Before considering the chief personalities, here is, as far as it is possible to draw up, a short list of the best known of the men, who between the years 1879 and 1885<sup>12</sup> grouped themselves round Ramakrishna, together with some indication of their birth and profession:

- 1879: 1 and 2. Doctor Ramchandra Dutt and his cousin, Manomohan Mitra;
3. Latu, Ramchandra's servant, of low birth from Behar, later known by the monastic name of Adbhutananda;
4. Surendranath Mitra, a rich employé in an English trading house, a householder and member of the Brahmo Samaj;
- 1881: 5. Rakhal Chandra Ghosh, son of a Zemindar (landed proprietor), later the first abbot of the Order under the name of Brahmananda;

<sup>12</sup> According to Saradananda, all Ramakrishna's disciples arrived before the end of 1884, and most of them between the middle of 1883 and the middle of 1884.



6. Gopal the elder, a paper merchant (later Advaitananda) ;
  7. Narendranath Dutt, a young intellectual, belonging to a Kshatriya family (later Vivekananda) ;
  - 1882 : 8. Mahendra Nath Gupta, the Principal of the Vidyasagar High School at Shambazar, Calcutta, who has since written the *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* under the pseudonym M., and who, unless I am mistaken, directs the school he founded, the Morton Institution ;
  9. Tarak Nath Ghoshal, the son of a lawyer, a member of the Brahmo Samaj, the present abbot of the Order under the name of Shivananda ;
  10. Jogendra Nath Chaudhury, a Brahman of Dakshineswar, of a good aristocratic family (later Yogananda).
  - 1883 : 11. Sasibhushan (later Ramakrishnananda) ;
  12. Saratchandra Chakravarti (later Saradananda) the Secretary of the Ramakrishna Mission for more than a quarter of a century and the great biographer of Ramakrishna, both Brahmans of Calcutta and members of the Brahmo Samaj ;
  13. Kaliprasad Chandra, the son of a Professor of English (later Abhedananda) ;
  14. Harinath Chattopadhyaya, a Brahman (later Turiyananda) ;
  15. Hariprasanna Chatterjee, a student (Vijnanananda).
  - 1884 : 16. Gangadhar Ghatak, a young student of fourteen (later Akhandananda) ;
  17. Girish Chandra Ghosh, a great actor and dramatist, the founder of the modern Bengal theatre, director of the Star Theatre at Calcutta ;
  - 1885 : 18. Subodh Ghosh, a student of seventeen, the son of a founder of a temple of Kali at Calcutta (later Subodhananda).
- I have not been able to find the exact dates for the entry of the following :
19. The rich proprietor, Balaram Bose, a mature and exceedingly pious man, whose gifts helped in the foundation of the Order ;
  20. The young spiritualistic medium, Nitya Niranjana Sen, whom Ramakrishna rescued by main force from occult beliefs,<sup>13</sup> and who was later Niranjanananda ;
  21. Devendra Mazumdar, a mature, married man, an employé of a Zemindar, and brother of the Bengal poet, Surendranath ;
  22. Baburam Ghosh, a student about twenty years of age (later Premananda) ;
  23. Tulasi Charan Dutt, a student of eighteen (later Nirmalananda).
- etc.,      etc.,      etc.
- It can be seen that with the exception of the poor servant, Latu, the majority belonged to the liberal professions, to the Brahman aristocracy or to the rich middle class of Bengal. They were either young men or in the prime of life, and several had been fashioned by the Brahmo Samaj. But I have only mentioned those who joined Ramakrishna strictly and who were the exponents of his thought.
- An ever changing crowd of all classes and all castes inundated him with its
- <sup>13</sup> "If you always think of ghosts, you will become a ghost. If you think of God, you will be God. Choose!"

restless movement. They came jumbled together, Maharajahs and beggars, journalists and pandits, artists, and devotees, Brahmos, Christians and Mohammedans, men of faith, men of action and business, old men, women and children. Often they journeyed from afar to question him, and there was no more rest for him day or night. For twenty hours out of the twenty-four he replied to all comers. Although his weakened health failed under the strain, he refused nobody, but gave out to all alike his sympathy, his enlightenment, and that strange power of soul, which even if he did not speak a word, gripped the hearts of his visitors and left them transformed for days. He won the respect of all sincere believers, and gladly received men of different faiths so that they might discuss their diversities before him that he might reconcile them.

But this was for him only one of the factors making for harmony. He desired something infinitely greater than the reconciliation of warring creeds—that man as a whole should understand, sympathise with and love the rest of mankind—that he should identify himself with the life of humanity. For, since Divinity was inherent in every man, every life for him was a religion, and should so become for all. And the more we loved mankind, however diverse, the nearer we should be to God.<sup>14</sup> It was unnecessary to seek Him in temples, or to call upon Him for miracles and revelations. He was here, everywhere, every second. We could see Him, we could touch Him, for He was our brother, our friend, our enemy, our very self. And it was because this omnipresent God flowed from the soul of Ramakrishna, because his light illumined, quietly, imperceptibly, the crowd surrounding him, that men felt themselves, without

understanding why, uplifted and strengthened.

He said to his disciples :

"We must build on different foundations from the makers of religions. We must live an inner life so intense that it becomes a Being. The Being will give birth to innumerable torches of truth. . . . Rivers flow because their father, the mountain, remains immovable. . . . Let us raise a mountain of God in the midst of humanity. It matters little where and when. When it has been raised, it will pour forth rivers of light and compassion over mankind for ever."<sup>15</sup>

There was then no question of founding or of expounding a new creed :

"Mother," Premananda heard him pray, "Do not let me become famous by leading believers in beliefs to me! Do not expound beliefs through my voice."<sup>16</sup>

And he warned his disciples against any kind of Ramakrishnaism.

Above all things there must be no barriers.

"A river has no need of barriers. If it dams itself up it stagnates and becomes foul."

Rather the gates must be flung wide open, the gates of oneself and of other people in order to bring about all-conquering Unity. This was to be the real part for his chosen disciples—by their common effort they were to "recreate the Being who would nourish men and women of the centuries to be."

Their part was to be an active one, demanding great gifts, and wide tolerance of spirit and heart. Nobody must stint himself, but give himself wholly.

That is why, although all men, without exception, were called into the divine community, he showed himself

<sup>14</sup> D. G. Mukerji, *op. cit.*

<sup>15</sup> Once when he was urged to define God, he replied, "And if I were to give you a definition of God, what would you do with it? Use it as an article of faith in order to found a new religion in my name? . . . I did not come into the world to begin a new cult! . . . Ah! No!"

<sup>16</sup> "Are you seeking God? Then seek Him in man! The Divinity is manifest in man more than in any other object." (*Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, p. 350).

very strict in the choice of his disciples ; for they were the Way, whereon the feet of humanity was to march. He claimed that it was not he, but the Mother, who chose them.<sup>17</sup> But was the Mother any different from the entity we carry in the depths of ourselves? This entity in the case of those, who, like Ramakrishna, had acquired the exceptional power of keeping intact an intense solitary concentration in a life passed in the midst of an innumerable throng, possesses antennæ, which infallibly seek out the inner man. At the most furtive contact they sound the depths, the capacities and the weaknesses, the virtues and the vices, things obscure even to the person under observation, that which is and that which will be. Ordinary men are apt to call in question the reality of this gift of intuitive vision, which reaches from the present into the future. But it is neither more nor less outside the limits of nature than the vibrations of the rod of the "Diviner" on the surface of the earth revealing the water beneath.

Ramakrishna was a wonderful wand in the hand of the Mother. Extraordinary tales are told of his physical and spiritual hypersensitiveness. Towards the end of his life such was his horror of riches that he could no longer touch gold without being burnt.<sup>18</sup>

And on another occasion, "Do not look for a religion! Be religion!"

"I did not choose them. The Divine Mother led them to me. She made me examine them. At night I meditate, the veil falls and reveals them to me. . . You can then see the ego of a man or a woman as through a glass case. . . . I satisfy myself concerning the character of my disciples before I initiate them."

What man of intuition can fail to recognise this method of thought, the use of this inward eye opening under lowered lids in the lonely centre of the spirit on the still warm spoils of the world captured by the lure of the senses? Only the mode of expression varies and the intensity of the eye.

"Vivekananda relates, "Even when he was sleeping, if I touched him with a piece of money, his hand would become bent and his whole body would become as it were paralysed." (*My Master*).

Further it is maintained that the mere touch of an impure person gave him physical pain analogous to the bite of a cobra.<sup>19</sup>

He read at sight the soul of those who approached him, and so, if he accepted them as his disciples, it was with full knowledge.<sup>20</sup> He discovered in a hardly formed adolescent, with character scarcely developed, the exact task for which he had been born. Sometimes he discovered a great destiny, suspected least of all by the person concerned. Perhaps he helped such destiny to be born by announcing it. This great moulder of souls cast with his fingers of fire the bronze of Vivekananda as well as the delicate and tender wax of Yogananda or Brahmananda. A curious fact is that the most markedly independent natures, those like Vivekananda the most resolute to resist him, were

<sup>19</sup> In illustration of this legendary trait : One day when in the kindness of his heart he had consented to touch a man, who, though outwardly without reproach was inwardly defiled, and who insisted that Ramakrishna should enrol him among his disciples, Ramakrishna howled with pain. He said to the man sorrowfully and kindly, "The touch of Divine bliss has become in you a cobra's poison. It is not in this life, my son!" and continued under his breath, "Your liberation."

A thousand other instances of this hypersensitiveness might be related. A blow given to a man in the street by a furious enemy left its physical mark on the flesh of Ramakrishna. His nephew saw his back red and inflamed at the sight of a man whose back was scored with the whip. And Girish Chandra Ghosh, whose witness is unimpeachable, has certified to the fact of his stigmata. This spiritual contact with all forms of life made him at one even with animals and plants. It has been told of him that he felt a brutal step upon the earth as it were upon his own heart.

<sup>20</sup> He did not blindly depend upon his own intuition. He visited the tutors of his young disciples, he learnt all about them and studied them in meditation. With a remarkable and scrupulous attention he noted their physiological characteristics of respiration, sleep and even digestion. He held that they were of considerable importance in confirming his diagnosis of their spiritual faculties and destiny.

bound sooner or later to yield to the spiritual election he had made. Moreover they then brought as much passion into play in submitting to him as they had formerly used in withstanding him.

He had the power of divining, seizing and keeping those spirits foreordained for his mission, and it would appear that not once was the hawk eye of the Paramahansa mistaken.

## IS THE BHAGAVAD GITA ONLY A SCRIPTURE OF YOGA?

By M. H. SYED, B.A., L.T.

It is said that the magnificent and priceless teachings of the Lord's Song could only be understood and digested by those that are on the path of return (Nivritti Mārga) and are not meant for the ordinary men of the world. I have often heard people say that the Bhagavad Gītā is the most abstruse and difficult book and so it is not profitable for those who are absorbed in worldly affairs to take it up for study. Some even say that its teachings are utterly impracticable and full of contradictions. Others go even so far as to say that since the main purpose of its whole teaching was only to prepare Arjuna and to give him heart and courage to fight with his nearest and dearest kinsmen, teachers, men renowned for deep erudition and scholarship, saints and sages, it is unworthy and unrighteous.

I propose in this short paper to try to meet these objections and to remove these misunderstandings. Not only that, I venture to state that the lofty and precious teachings of the Lord's Song are equally practicable for men of both the paths; i.e. the path of "forth-going" and the path of "return." It is at once instructive and useful for an average man and for a highly developed soul.

Since it is admitted on all hands that the Lord's Song is a scripture of Yoga and hence necessary for aspirants on the Path who are leading the life of self-sacrifice, meditation and devotion, I will content myself with proving that it is equally necessary for the men of the world and their success in life.

At the very outset, it would be well to bear in mind the most significant fact that the author of the Gītā was an incarnation of Vishnu, the Preserver, and that He put on the human garb—as He Himself says—"for the protection of the good, for the destruction of the evil-doers, for the sake of firmly establishing righteousness." His teaching must therefore of necessity be of such a nature as to enable men of all grades on the path of evolution to draw inspiration therefrom. From this standpoint, if its teachings be too abstruse and difficult to be grasped by the ordinary run of humanity, half of the advent of an Avatāra in the world of men is defeated.

The clear understanding of one simple fact thus removes the first of the two objections and misconceptions referred to in the beginning of this paper, namely, that the Lord's Song is meant only for aspirants on the path of return, the Nivritti Mārga, as it is technically called; and that its teachings are too difficult to understand.

As to the last objection it is true that we have to enlarge our view of life and widen our conception of That which is less hampered by limitations than ourselves if we want to understand the deep meaning hidden in it.

We are all familiar in our everyday life with the fact that, when a government has to maintain peace and order in a country, it adopts every possible measure to remove such things or persons as are the instruments of disorder and anarchy, and by so doing as a matter of course peace and order

are restored. But the first reason why Shri Krishna, the Lord and the King of the whole world, did not put a stop to the civil war that broke out between the Kurus and Pândavas, though He could have done so by virtue of His divine powers, was that He wanted to fulfil His mission on earth, which was the establishment of the kingdom of righteousness by removing all the disturbing elements that were stumbling-blocks in maintaining order and peace. The very fact of the existence of bitter strife between the members of one family shows that "there was decay of righteousness", and so it engaged the serious attention of the Lord of the world to restore Dharma. It is well to remember that the Lord, who was fully aware of the state of affairs beforehand, did not at once rush to war to re-establish peace and order; first He had recourse to all possible measures to reconcile the contending parties, but failed in His attempt.

The second reason why He strove to remove Arjuna's despondency and to convince him beyond any doubt that it was right to engage in the Great War, was to teach him to respond to the call of duty. His splendid teaching on performing one's duty holds good for all times and for people of every creed and caste. "Better one's own duty, though destitute of merit, than the duty of another well discharged. Better death in the discharge of one's own duty; the duty of another is full of danger." What a grand and yet a simple teaching, the true secret of success in every department of life, whether temporal or spiritual! The truth of these remarkable words may be read in the rise and fall of the prominent nations of the world.

Almost the same spirit runs through the sweet melody of a Western poet who sings:

"Stern Daughter of the Voice of God,  
O Duty, if that name thou love,  
Who are a light to guide, a rod  
To check the erring and reprove."

What has made the West great? Is it not the prominent sense of "duty" that accounts for its true greatness? If this teaching on the performance of one's duty be not practicable, how is it that it is followed by millions of men and women to-day?

Let a man of the world intellectually realise his immortality as embodied in the following beautiful teachings, and his view of life will at once be changed, much of his worry and anxiety removed.

"Not at any time verily was I not, nor thou, nor these princes of men, nor verily shall we ever cease to be, hereafter. As the dweller in the body findeth in the body childhood, youth, old age, so passeth he on to another body; the steadfast one grieveth not thereat."

That right conduct is followed by right understanding is a well-trying maxim and contains a great truth. Most of the people of the world have a wrong view of life and of the final destiny of man, hence they sadly lack strength of mind and character. Do not some of them lead a reckless and utterly indifferent life? And why? Because they labour under the false notion that life after death is a mystery of mysteries, that as nothing is known of what happens beyond the grave, it is well that the present life should be enjoyed to the highest degree by indulging in all sorts of pleasures, regardless of the consequences that they bring with them. Men fear death because they think that they are only bodies, and that when the body disintegrates the whole being perishes. Many people, notably the followers of those religions who have but a vague idea of the life after death, and who believe that the short span of one life is all that they are permitted by their God to live, live in terror of death; for they think that death will not allow them to drink the cup of life to their heart's content, but will take them away from the scenes of their enjoyments, and relentlessly separate them

once for all from their kith and kin, and from all that they hold dear. Truly under such circumstances their fear is a natural and a reasonable one. But in the Gîtâ, Divine Wisdom steps in and relieves them of their anxiety and terror, by reminding them that "this dweller in the body of every one is ever invulnerable." For "as a man, casting off worn-out garments, taketh new ones, so the dweller in the body, casting off worn-out bodies, entereth into others that are new." What room is there then for sorrow? We look on death as something sad and terrible. But it is the friend and not the foe of men; for it helps him to throw off an old garment and to put on a new one. We all know that much of the progress of the world is checked by the lack of unity and harmony among the people of various countries, different races, castes, and creeds. People look upon each other as aliens, having no common bond of love to unite them, forgetting the one life that all share. The constant refrain of the Lord's Song is that He and He alone is the life within everything; by Him everything lives.

"I, O Gudâksha, am the Self seated in the hearts of all beings. I am the beginning, the middle and the end of all." "If men hate each other, they hate Me in the bodies of others and in their own; if men torment bodies, they torment Me also, seated in the inner body."

A man who realises this fact of the indwelling spirit of God in everything is bound to love his neighbours as he loves his own self. How could a man of the world who tries to keep in view this ideal, injure, hate, persecute and blame his fellow-being? Is there any man in the world who has won the love and approbation of his fellow-men by outraging and violating this ideal of unity? A proud, sullen and irritable man is never successful in any business or profession. Doctors, lawyers, merchants and others who have achieved any distinction have always been known to be uniformly courteous

and kind to all. It may be that their love is not so deep and all-embracing as that of "a sage who looks equally on a Brâhmana adorned with learning and humility, a cow, an elephant and even a dog and an outcast." Yet if they wish to succeed in life they must be loving and kind to all with whom they come into contact.

It is taught by right-thinking men that the world we live in is entirely guided by an Immutable Law. Whatever cause a man sets up is bound to be followed by its effect in due course of time. Some people who fail to attain the immediate result of an action, in their ignorance think that their effort is lost. This is impossible. No effort is lost, no energy is dissipated; the just Law brings in the fulness of time the result of all our activities. So the Blessed Lord has taught us: "Thy business is with the action only and not with its fruit; so let not the fruit of action be thy motive, nor be thou to inaction attached." For a man who is firmly convinced of the inviolability of the Law it is simply superfluous to worry about the fruit of action, when he knows that sooner or later, to-day or to-morrow, the fruit, or in other words the effect, of the cause that he has set up is bound to return to him, whether his motive power be "fruit of action" or no.

A man who concerns himself with the careful and proper discharge of his business and leaves the rest to the Good Law is most efficient of workers, and his efforts are crowned with success. Once done he has nothing more to do with a work, and is free and fresh to do another piece of business. This "skill in action" enables him to do a greater amount of work than can a man who is always anxious about the fruit of his action. A man who has not learnt this skill in action is full of bustle and hurry; his thoughts are diverted and his mind is ever wandering, and so his works are imperfect and never satisfactory.

The Blessed Lord has well pointed out: "Not for the non-harmonised is there concentration; for him without concentration there is no peace; and for the unpeaceful how can there be happiness?"

## POLITICO-ECONOMIC RECONSTRUCTION OF INDIA

BY A SEEKER OF TRUTH

### V

Coming to immediate political issues, we come across three schools of political thought prevailing in the country: (1) the school of Dominion Status, (2) the school of Complete Independence, and (3) the school of Communism. The first school has still now partial faith in British justice and British connection. It is of opinion that there will be ample scope for developing the political and economical resources of India within the British Empire. It adds that in the leading strings of British Imperialism, undeveloped India will remain peacefully on the safe side and will not enter into the din and bustle of international politics. According to it Self-government like Canada or Australia is in no way a mean achievement. The Independence party says that such a creed is the product of our denationalised mentality, that self-government on the part of an alien race like India within the British Empire is a misnomer. This party represents the general mentality of the youths of the country, who are specially schooled in Western politics, Western nationalism and the Western conception of self-determination. The advocates of independence are convinced that once India is free, all the intricate problems of the land will be solved by an efficient system of administration, the heavy economic drainage will be stopped for ever, and the country will shine in knowledge, power and prosperity. The Communists, however, laugh away the ideas of the Independence party consisting of the 'middle-class' politicians.

They ask: "Freedom for whom? Are we not going to introduce a brown bureaucracy in place of a white bureaucracy? What is the guarantee that the men in power will keep their promise at the hour of trial? Will not the wretched condition of the masses in the so-called free countries repeat itself in India? Will it not ultimately lead the masses to launch into a counter-revolution?" It seems that the Communists dream of a single revolution by which they can destroy the foreign and the bourgeois governments at the same time and establish a proletarian state in their place.

Democracy or republicanism is not an altogether new thing in India, as we have previously seen. But the old traditions of India are almost lost. The two types of government that have received the attention of political thinkers are State Socialism and Anarchist Communism. A new experiment is going on in Russia, but we must wait to see its final results. Bernard Shaw suggests State Capitalism for England, which stands for nationalising all industries and land, by removing all institutions started on individual initiative. State Socialism is also a representative form of government with an efficient civil service, vested with all the departments of administration. In this system, the overwhelming majority of people will have to do nothing directly; they will only delegate powers to certain representatives and leave them alone to think and work as they like. When there is too much centralisation of power in a few hands, there cannot be genuine self-government among the

people at large. Anarchist Communism, on the other hand, is bent on abolishing the state altogether so that people may organise themselves on their own initiative into innumerable free associations without the help of any state. Though there is a bright prospect of genuine self-government in this system, still it is not sufficient for the preservation of law and order and also for national defence. Anarchist Communism fails to keep up the sameness of a system throughout a large territory.

In struggling for a new system in India, we must understand the significance of real democracy at the very outset. By real democracy we mean a system that can afford the greatest facilities to the people for tackling their own problems and managing their local affairs on their own initiative. The people have to suffer a great deal under a system which is disproportionately centralised. For the solution of even simple local problems, which can be very well tackled locally, the people have to run up to towns and cities. Various superstructures of government are created in the name of law and order, and these require batches of 'governmental middle-men' who are fattened at the expense of the poor masses. The people join in mere electioneering campaigns, and even there the vicious propaganda of party politics does not allow them to consider any political issue soberly. They delegate powers to representatives, who cannot administer affairs disinterestedly. Ambitious persons get the upper hand in everything and they become the political wire-pullers in state-affairs. If there is too much centralisation, there is eventual decay of real democracy.

We have seen previously how ancient India made an attempt to establish real democracy by the dichotomy of Rājadharmā and Prajādharmā. It will be interesting to note that Bertrand Russell suggests the very same thing in his *Roads to Freedom* :

"(1) Government by majorities can be made less oppressive by devolution, by placing the decision of questions primarily affecting only a section of the community in the hands of that section, rather than of a Central Chamber. In this way, men are no longer forced to submit to decisions made in a hurry by people ignorant of the matter in hand and not personally interested. Autonomy for internal affairs should be given, not only to areas but to all groups, such as industries and Churches which have important common interests not shared by the rest of the community. (2) The great powers vested in the executive of a modern state are chiefly due to the frequent need of rapid decisions, especially as regards foreign affairs. If the danger of war were practically eliminated, more cumbersome but less autocratic methods will be possible, and the Legislature might recover many of the powers which the executive has usurped. By these two methods, the intensity of the interference with liberty involved in government can be gradually diminished."

The ideal system of politics, therefore, must be decentralised as far as possible. The people must be at perfect liberty to frame a scheme of political life of their own for the management of local affairs, and delegate the powers for the management of inter-provincial and international affairs to their chosen representatives forming the state. Those powers alone will be vested with the state, which are absolutely necessary for the defence of the country, for the management of bigger industrial plants and for the preservation of the homogeneity of affairs throughout the country. Let us see what distinct political shape an Indian village takes in such a political system. The villagers will be organised into various associations and groups with agriculture, industries, trade, education, etc., as their avocations. Thus the dying sub-castes will become distinct political units in the village life and they will send their representatives to the village council or the Panchāyat. This newly modelled Panchāyat will become a powerful local



body with deliberative and executive functions and guide the cultural, political and economical policy of the village. A political structure will be built from villages upward—with District Panchâyats, Provincial Panchâyats and All-India Panchayat. The All-India Panchayat will have a federal constitution and undertake all inter-provincial and international affairs. Thus an ideal political structure with the least possible centralisation in the state and the greatest possible decentralisation in the consecutive local bodies will be gradually erected. The outline scheme of Swaraj, drawn up by S. J. Bhagavandas suggests an almost similar political structure for India. The scheme suggested here can very easily be adapted to the spiritual conceptions of our race. It will serve the spiritual and the material requirements of our people. Materially, it will develop real democracy on our soil, and spiritually, its process of decentralisation will give ample scope for practising Karma Yoga. The people will be in direct contact with the details of every piece of work and it will be easier for them to take up work in a reverential attitude. One must heartily love work before one can spiritualise it, and no work can be loved if its pros and cons are quite unknown to us. Therefore, if politics is to be spiritualised, we must lay special emphasis upon the devolution of political functions.

The advocates of complete independence will say that we are going to put the cart before the horse. They will say: "Let there be complete independence first, then there will be enough time to conceive of better political schemes and to work them out in the country." With due respect, we take a new line of departure here. All the great political movements of the world, without having the support of the people, and started by a mere class, have dismally failed to reach the final goal. When the revolution ended and the time came for reaping the harvest, the common people were nowhere. Again

and again the ignorant and the poor masses fell victims to the ambitious projects of selfish but powerful groups. The defect was that the position of the masses was not a whit improved previously by means of political and cultural education. It is for this reason that any premature attempt at capturing the state, without strengthening the masses, will be a positive blunder. The real task before us is to go directly to the masses and train them culturally and politically in the path of least resistance. For strengthening our real foundation there is no harm in seeking help from all possible quarters. By stirring the imagination of the people with undesirable catch-phrases, we shall only court unnecessary resistance in our path and thus the real political growth of the country will be delayed. The future government of the country will be established upon the common consent and dictation of the people, trained politically and culturally for decades. When the people have got a distinct political status of their own, it will be easier for them to dictate terms to the existing state. It is in this way that a real democracy is to grow in India, slowly and steadily in the path of least resistance.

## VI

Economic institutions form the positive background of the political, social and religious structures of a community. Yet economical doctrines and institutions are no less affected by the socio-civic standards and the religious ideals. The ideal of a simple, ethical life, the view of the earthly life as a passing phase of a vast, eternal life, and the spirit of renunciation, all these exert a great influence on Consumption, for they minimise the intensity of desire for enjoyment and transform the motives of Bhoga. Brahmacharya or a strictly disciplined life in childhood and youth, Gârhasthya or a householder's life following the disciplinary measures of the scriptures, Vânaprastha or a retired life for contemplation and lastly Sannyâsa

or a monastic life, when introduced in a nationwide scale, act very effectively on Supply and Demand. As national demand for good decreases, the principles and methods of production will tend to become less intricate. The ideal of spiritual unity will inevitably develop a socio-civic unity, and this will bring about an appreciable change in Distribution, that is to say, the theories and the practices concerning inheritance, rent, interest, wages, profit, etc., will be metamorphosed. A life of spontaneous freedom in contact with Nature will avoid all complexities and artificialities, and people will prefer a comparatively isolated life in village to the congestion of town life. This will tend to decrease the number of larger markets, and consequently the monetary system and the processes of exchange will change. If India is to attain her cultural Swaraj, if she is to re-Aryanise herself completely, then her old institutions of Brahmacharya, Gârhashthya, Vânaprastha and Sannyâsa will have to reappear in modernised forms. India can ill afford to give up the ideal of renunciation, if she is to remain true to herself. The harmonisation of Dharma, Artha, Kâma and Moksha (Duty, Wealth, Desire and Liberation) requires a strict socio-spiritual discipline which is sure to lower our standard of living in comparison with that of other nations, given to unbridled enjoyment of life.

In framing a scheme of economic reconstruction for India even along utilitarian lines, the need of all these fundamental considerations cannot be over-estimated. We know from history how India, even up to the early nineteenth century, was economically free of all other nations, and how her agriculturists produced immense quantities of raw materials, her craftsmen manufactured all necessary articles and luxuries, and her trade-relations extended not only throughout her various provinces but also throughout the whole world. It is too painful to narrate the sad tale of the destruction of Indian industries. At

present we find that India has become a land for producing mere raw materials for the manufacturing nations of the world, and in spite of a limited number of mills and factories, she remains a dumping ground of the manufactured commodities of other nations. About 80 p.c. of the people of India have been compelled to live from hand to mouth by means of mere agriculture. The old cottage industries of the country being destroyed, there is a serious problem of unemployment in the country. Only 2 p.c. of the total population, consisting of middlemen, zamindars and officers of the state, live on the labour of 98 p.c. of the large population of India. Though in every normal year the balance of trade is in favour of India, this 98 p.c. of our population derive little or no benefit from it. The profits accruing from the export-import trade go to the pockets of middlemen and captains of industry, belonging to the 2 p.c. of the population, and to the Britishers outside as Home Charges, interest of Public Debt, etc. The champions of large-scale production are of opinion that a large number of people must be taken out of agriculture and employed in various industries in towns and cities. This will result in giving larger holdings of land to the farmers; and the people released from agriculture will prosper by earning wages from the newly started big industrial plants. The extremists say that even foreign capital ought to be utilized in India for this purpose. This will give employment to a vast number of our population and increase the general prosperity of the country. It is strongly argued that labour cannot be organised as a political force without being brought under the heels of capital, and that once the country is thoroughly industrialized, Trade Unionism will naturally grow and the communisation of land, factories, etc., will be very easily accomplished.

But as against this, we must remember certain important facts. There is a growing tendency among almost all

nations to make themselves industrially self-contained, both as regards raw materials as well as manufactured commodities. We find that Russia which was a store-house of raw materials before, has been already growing up as a manufacturing nation. So one source of raw materials is closed. Similar is the case with Eastern nations also. They are also becoming industrialised. All these mean that market for surplus products will be extremely limited in future and that the concentration of specified industries among selected nations as presupposed in the fictitious theory of the division of labour will slowly yield to decentralisation in the industrial life of the world. If, therefore, there is extensive use of large machineries in India, the question of unemployment is bound to arise, for a minority will be enough to meet the scanty demands of foreign markets. What would the majority do if India is really industrialised in the mean while? The fact is, it is ultimately dangerous to build large factories and draw the people away from their agricultural and other rural occupations. Is there no scope for applying science and modern methods in villages? Certainly there is. The ideal economic order which every nation will have to struggle to realise is the one with agriculture supplemented by industry. Intensive agriculture combined with scientifically organised cottage industries can successfully tackle all our economic problems. First, in such an order, people will enjoy ample freedom; secondly, it will solve the problem of unemployment for good; thirdly, it will remove the necessity of emigration; and fourthly, it will create a proper moral atmosphere for practising Karma Yoga, which is the salient feature of Indian life and civilisation. For the fuller study of the ways and means for the decentralisation of industries, we specially refer to two extremely interesting books of Kropotkin,—*The conquest of Bread, and Fields, Factories and Workshops*.

In India particularly, the whole historical evolution suggests such a line of work. The best workers will be those who will properly utilise the surviving elements of our past culture and civilisation. One such remnant of the past is still preserved in the caste-system of our society. It has withstood the shocks of ages and for centuries preserved our racial characteristics. It will be an utter folly to reject it in toto and develop a new social order on the line of Western industrialism. True the system is at present corrupt and rotten. But we are convinced that in its pristine purity, it has a noble mission before it. It is high time to interpret it in conformity with the real plan and purpose of our society. It has four aspects—religious, social, political and economic, and in modern times it should be energised in all of these aspects. Preach the ideals of the scriptures to the various castes and the sub-castes; give them culture and learning, and there will be an end of all oppressions in the name of religion. Make Brahminhood the common asset of all castes and sub-castes, and the social oppressions will cease for ever. Combine all the existing sub-castes as so many units of a political system, and we shall evolve an efficient system of village self-government. Organise the castes and sub-castes on the line of Guild-Socialism, and an industrial democracy will slowly come into being and the exploitation of the masses by the classes will cease to exist. Aggressively preach the doctrine of Karma Yoga which declares that no work, performed as a duty and sanctified with a spiritual motive, is ever mean, and we shall see how all avocations of life become dignified, and untouchability and other social vices vanish away. Revolutionise agricultural and industrial methods with the help of modern science, without any detriment to the caste system, and we shall give freedom, prosperity and honourable employment to the 98 p.c. of our population. The revival of caste system on these lines will remove the

struggle between the middle classes and the masses. The educated middle classes are snatching away the various occupations of the masses. All occupations of the sub-castes must be handed over to them, and the knowledge of science and the principles of co-operation are to be vigorously preached. This will enable them to stand on their own legs, by reorganising their industries along with agriculture; and naturally there will no more be any pressure upon agriculture. In this age, Swami Vivekananda stood as the champion of the masses and also of the caste system as an integral part of Indian civilisation and culture. He said: "Caste should not go, but should only be readjusted occasionally. Within the old structure is to be found life enough for the building up of two hundred thousand new ones. It is sheer nonsense to desire the abolition of caste." The Sudra-Shakti, of which he spoke so eloquently, was visualised by him as the latent power of the masses—the power which is to manifest itself freely and spontaneously from humble cottages, farms, etc. The gospel of Nārāyana-Sevā, the ideal of Brahminising all castes, the principles of Karma Yoga, all these, as suggested by him, go to the very root of the problems, social, political and the like.

A question may strike us here. What will be the case with railways, steamships, ironworks, press, etc.? In our opinion, the necessity of these things can be and should be minimised. When decentralised systems of politics and economics will be evolved, much of the complexities of life will be removed. The formation of practically autonomous local bodies, political, social and economic, and the growth of the larger and larger groups out of the co-ordination of these groups will enable the people to ably manage their local affairs themselves. But we do not, at least for the time being, ignore large-scale production in toto. Large-scale production to a certain extent will be essential for our national defence. Until peace is finally established among the nations of the

world, it will be utter folly to ignore the necessities of self-protection. India will have to most efficiently organise iron-works, railways, steamships, etc., so long as the economic imperialism of the West persists. India's mission is undoubtedly spiritual. But the spirituality of India must have a positive background in material prosperity and secular status. So as long as the abnormal situation of international politics persists India must take recourse to large-scale production for the requirements of self-defence. For this a microscopic minority of our people will have to be sacrificed at the altar of the nation. It is these people alone who will have to be removed from the natural freedom of village life to big factories, mines, etc. It is in those places alone that we have to take active measures for minimising the hours of labour, for arranging various amusements and for starting various cultural institutions so that the spiritual fervour of these unfortunate people may be kept alive.

## VII

On the basis of the above discussion, the main features of a scheme of national reconstruction on spiritual basis, are stated below. The secular and the spiritual aspects of our rising nationalism must be developed side by side. Sister Nivedita specially emphasised this point, when dwelling on the Indian National Congress, as follows:

"The Congress represents, not a political, or partisan movement, but the political side of the national movement—a very different thing. . . . This implies that the main body of the army is not in the Congress, that the Congress as a whole is merely one side,—the political side—of an incomparably vaster, though less definitely organised host. . . . Thus corresponding to the Congress, the national movement must have another and non-political limb, as it were."

## SPIRITUAL ASPECT

For consolidating the spiritual basis of the new nation which is to rise in India, the existence of an All-India Religious Organisation is the first desideratum. It must have thoroughly co-ordinated branches throughout the whole of India. For ensuring local initiative and freedom, and for recognising the special temperaments, tastes and necessities of various provinces, it is better that this organisation develops on federal lines.

The aims and objects of the organisation are to be as follows:

(a) To practise, preserve and diffuse the universal ideals of the Vedānta and thus harmonise the Vedas, the Bible and the Koran.

(b) To revise and interpret the rites, ceremonies and rituals of all sects in the light of the underlying principles, and to make an attempt so that one sect may heartily join the rites and observances of another.

(c) The ideals of the Divinity of man, and the solidarity of humanity, as interpreted in the Vedānta, must be vigorously preached. A spiritual conception of *man* as well as of *India*, as found in the worship of God in man and of the Virāt in India, is to be realised by our countrymen.

(d) The practical bearing of the religious principles on the various activities of life is to be clearly shown and the spirit of Karma Yoga to be instilled into the minds of all.

(e) With a view to evolve an all-comprehensive scheme of life for the people, a systematic study of Indian history, Indian philosophy, Indian sociology, Indian polity, Indian economics, Indian art, etc., must be made with special reference to Indian spirituality which forms the very basis of our civilisation and culture. A comprehensive study of the East and the West is also a desideratum, as India must assimilate many noble elements of Western culture. It is not an academic study that is needed. We

want creative ideas in every department of life. And spirituality being the greatest creative force in Indian nationalism, it is the spiritual men who will have to evolve a complete scheme of life for the country.

Such a body will represent the theoretical side of a spiritual nationalism for India, and adopt proper measures to propagate the gospel of this spiritual nationalism. Specially at the foundation, this body will have to undertake various nation-building activities, either separately or in co-operation with an equally well-organised body, to take up the practical side of our nationalism, and organise the country socially, politically, economically and culturally. The Indian National Congress, if it is spiritualised and if its ideals and methods are slightly modified, can rise to the occasion and represent the secular aspect of this spiritual nationalism.

## SECULAR ASPECT

The programme of national reconstruction in its secular aspect, is to be worked out from the bottom as well as from the top. The Indian National Congress, the legislative bodies, the social service leagues, the Hindu Sabhās, the various Moslem organisations, the Greater India Society, the various school of arts and crafts, etc., are to give up their sectarian angles of vision and subscribe to the universal faith of the spiritual nationalism for India. From the top, they must labour hard to create a favourable public opinion, and bring substantial pressure, moral or otherwise, where necessary. From the bottom, the national structure is to be erected from villages upwards. It is the bounden duty of the above organisations to adopt measures for financing the national movement and to train up workers and volunteers for serving the masses. If these fail to rise to the occasion, then a people's party must rise and take up the work. The Indian communist, M.

N. Roy, suggests the organisation of a people's party for establishing communism in India. But, as we have previously seen, India has a higher mission to fulfil, and so a people's party organised on spiritual basis and thoroughly Indianised in its outlook can alone help the nation.

The castes and sub-castes being the traditional groupings of Indian population, it is practical as well as beneficial to organise the villages on the caste basis. Owing to the clashes of interests among the masses and classes in the village, it will not be possible at the very inception to make the Panchâyat thoroughly representative of all sub-castes. The religious Sangha or the Sevâ Samiti must very cautiously proceed on the lines of least resistance and tactfully use all the available forces for the realisation of the ultimate goal. It will be a mere dissipation of energies, if any distrust or rancour is created among the masses and the classes. For the time being, workers will have to be recruited from middle-class youngmen, living mostly in towns. The workers ought to remember that their duty is to make each village self-supporting, and then depart. All the available constructive elements are to be taken back from the towns to the villages. So each district town is to start a Sevâ Samity or a religious Sangha, primarily for mobilising young men and for sending them to villages to work out the constructive programme.

#### I. Political Side :

(a) We must organise Panchâyats in villages with a maximum of local autonomy and a minimum of control by higher organisations formed out of the integration of village Panchâyats. Thus will evolve from village centres upwards town centres, district centres, provincial centres and an all-India centre.

(b) The village Panchâyat is to be in charge of education, sanitation, law and

order, economical and industrial pursuits, etc.

(c) The whole scheme is to be worked out in a spirit of service. The workers must be fully conscious that national efficiency, and not any political radicalism, by way of establishing the old Indian scheme in a new form, is our aim. As Indian politics is based on spirituality, it is only the spiritual men that should build at the foundation.

#### II. Economic Side :

(a) Extensive propaganda must be undertaken for preaching the co-operative principles. For this purpose, primary education in a simple but comprehensive manner is the first requisite. Proper means should be adopted for the establishment and introduction of Co-operative Credit Societies, co-operative production, co-operative stores, co-operative marketing, etc. We should fully avail ourselves of the Government co-operative banks.

(b) Agriculture is to be supplemented by various local industries, organised on scientific lines, such as lac culture and manufacture, apiculture, bamboo-working and basket-making, fishing industry, dairying, sugar industry, oil-pressing industry, pottery, carpentry, hand-loom weaving, spinning, silk industry, tassar and *endi*-rearing and manufacturing, dyeing, the leather industry, sola manufacture and tinsel industry, bangle-making, metal-work, and building and carving. The intelligentsia must come forward with a new spirit of service. The worship of Daridra-Nârâyana, which Swami Vivekananda so much emphasised, is to be brought to its legitimate fulfilment by enlarging our scope of service.

(c) Local conditions are to be studied very carefully and minutely for the development of these industries. Specialists are to devote their sole attention to improve these on scientific lines as is suggested by Kropotkin in his *Fields, Factories and Workshops*.

Thus the sub-castes will reorganise their industries. Industrially, they will become fully efficient. Spiritually, they will find better scope for practising Karma Yoga. Politically, they will be powerful units of the village self-government, and through it of the government of the whole of India.

(d) The intelligentsia is to inspire, guide and finance this industrial movement. It is to start industrial banks, co-operative banks, agricultural banks, etc. The Indian National Congress ought to undertake these works. If it

fails, then a people's party must develop with its comprehensive scheme of national reconstruction on spiritual basis.

It is not a large number of workers, but the spirit of unselfish service of even a limited number, that counts. On the eve of the rebirth of our spiritual nationalism, let us remember the message of Vivekananda: "The national ideals of India are renunciation and service. Intensify her in these two channels and the rest will come of itself."

(Concluded)

## PRACTICE OF RELIGION

BY ANANDA  
BRAHMACHARYA

At this juncture, it is necessary to dwell briefly on *Brahmacharya* (continence). It concerns equally the married and the unmarried, for it is the very basis of spiritual progress. *Brahmacharya* has been differently explained and no doubt it has many implications. But its simple and essential meaning is abstention from sexual thought and deed in every form. The grossest form of sexuality is sexual intercourse. This, of course, must be given up totally. But when one persists in the practice of *Brahmacharya*, one realises that this gross form is really the expression of inner impulses. The control and eradication of these impulses, he finds, is the essential thing. Without it, mere outward abstention avails little. The root of sex-consciousness is struck deep in our mind and life. It may almost be said to be contemporaneous with the very beginning of individual life. The idea of duality is in a sense the prop of the sexual consciousness. Therefore, Sri Ramakrishna said that until one has realised God one cannot get rid of lust completely. To recognise sexual difference in men and

women is a kind of sexuality. When one has got rid of lust completely, one will not feel that difference. He will see only the *Atman*, existing in all, beyond all distinctions of sex and body. *Brahmacharya* has all these wide significances among its implications. But of course, in the beginning, one cannot rise at once to these high attitudes. One must begin with the lower heights. Nevertheless, one should not forget the goal. We must emphasise that what we have said above about the forms of sex-consciousness is nothing imaginary. These are true and real; and until we have eradicated them, we have not become true *Brahmachārins*.

If sex-consciousness is indeed so pernicious, what should our attitude be towards it? Should we encourage it, or try to kill it in any way we can? One has asked if sexual control is essential to spiritual progress, and if it is so, why the *Rishis* of old married and begot children. We say with as much emphasis as we can command that it is *absolutely* necessary. There are reasons. Hindu readers know that our *Sādhakas* and scriptures have re-

cognised the presence of certain *Chakras* or occult circles in our body. These, according to them, are generally seven in number. The lowest *Chakras*, *Mulādhāra*, *Svādhīsthāna* and *Manipura* are situated in the lower parts of the trunk of our body, against the sexual organ and the stomach. *Anāhata* is situated opposite the heart, *Vishuddha* against the throat, and *Ajñā* against the junction of the brows and *Sahasrāra* in the brain. The mind or our self-consciousness has its centre of gravity, at any particular moment, in either of these mystic centres. We feel the rising up of the mind and its going down. Wherever the mind is, there energy and blood are concentrated. This is our common experience. When we have a high, pure thought, we shall feel the upper parts of the body, the heart and the brain stimulated. But when the thought is impure, it is the lower parts that are stimulated. What we do not generally perceive is that corresponding to these gradations of subjective experiences, there are also gradations of objective realities. A man whose mind is essentially located in the lower *Chakras* has one experience of the reality. He who has his mind in the higher circles, has quite a different experience. To the former, the world is a hellish business (of course he does not feel it as hell); he does not see anything divine in it; it is material and sensuous to him. He is full of the body-idea. He aggrandises himself physically. He is eager for physical comforts and enjoyments. He does not feel attracted to anything higher. His, in short, is an animal existence and animal experience. But if he can somehow remove his mind from those lower regions and locate it in the higher circles, his vision of the world will change at once. He will no longer find it material and sordid. He will perceive it as instinct with a divine light and life. The world will no longer be material to him, but spiritual. His own likes and dislikes, his desires and

aspirations, his relations with others, all will undergo a complete change. If he can take his mind to the highest circle, there will be only God, and nothing else.

This correspondence of the subjective *Chakras* with the visions of the objective reality is an essential consideration in the determination of the value and need of *Brahmacharya*. If we are to get the higher visions of reality,—and spiritual progress means nothing but that—we must raise our mind to the higher subjective planes. But how can we do that if we stimulate the lower *Chakras* by our thought and action? If we indulge in sexual thought and action, our lower circles will be excited and the mind perforce must be there, and there will, therefore, be only a low, sordid vision of reality for us, not the higher ones. So it is urgent, nay, absolutely necessary that there must not be any stimulation of the lower circles on any account.

Our questioner will find his answer at once. Sexual abstention is absolutely necessary for spiritual progress. There is also another reason. Spiritual practice causes great strain on the nerves and the brain. A nervous system and brain which are impaired by incontinence, is too weak to bear that great strain. They will give way before a high spiritual impulse; and the result will be total collapse and incurable diseases. Besides, the perception of the higher phases of the reality requires the activity of very fine nerves. Without *Brahmacharya* they die and become inoperative. Higher experiences are impossible for people who are not *Brahmachārins*. As regards the *Rishis*, we know so little about them that it is extremely difficult to say anything definitely about their actions. There is no doubt that the word *Rishi* was loosely applied generally. A physician was a *Rishi*; a grammarian was a *Rishi*; a writer of law-codes was a *Rishi*; and of course a man of spiritual realisation was also



a *Rishi*. Naturally all *Rishis* were not spiritual, and not all of those *Rishis* who practised spirituality were highly spiritual. How then can we deduce anything definitely from their conduct as regards the essential conditions of high spiritual life? Then, it may be that though they begot children in the prime of their life, in after-life, when they gave themselves to spiritual practice seriously, they observed strict *Brahmacharya*. That this supreme claim of *Brahmacharya* is not new-fangled, is clear from the facts that in the *Upanishads* themselves there are statements about the necessity of *Brahmacharya* for spiritual realisations, and that there were even in those ancient times a body of men who never entered the world or came in contact with women, but observed complete continence. Anyhow, actual experience is a thousand times superior to historical evidence. Let us practise *Sādhana* and we shall feel what place *Brahmacharya* holds in spiritual life.

There are many modern ideas prevailing in our country now, which consider *Brahmacharya* as unnatural and detrimental to the all-round growth of life. These are all foolish ideas and Hindus at least should scorn to listen to them. It may be sexual restraint will generate some pathological symptoms. What does it matter? Do we not gain something infinitely superior? We must try. Through all suffering we must proceed on our way. Surely, surely, if we are to believe the saints and sages of all climes and times, the way will lead to the golden gate. Without effort, *Brahmacharya* cannot be practised. Restraint is necessary, though it may produce complexes. But the complexes will not be the only products of our endeavour. There will be also spiritual illumination. And that alone counts.

It is quite true that all cannot and should not practise *Brahmacharya*. We are, of course, considering the cases of those who are seriously aspiring after spirituality and not of all and

sundry. *Without spiritual enthusiasm, Brahmacharya cannot be practised.* One must yearn for God, this is the primary condition of the practice of *Brahmacharya*. The secret is to forget the body. It is often found that being intent on the practice of *Brahmacharya*, one gives too much attention to the little physiological details and the details of food and living. One is unduly conscious of his practice of continence. This ultra-awareness is psychologically harmful and in the long run not sufficiently productive of success. The more we dwell on sexuality, be it with the desire of indulging or checking it, the less we shall succeed in getting rid of it. To forget it is the way to success. Let the thought of God engulf you so that the mind will not think of body or its comforts. For this, the repetition of the name of God is very efficacious. Of course, some helpful habits should be formed. They are necessary. But let them not become obsessions. Some restrictions about food are necessary. We must not take exciting food. We must not come in contact with men or things that are reminiscent of sexuality. It is urgent that we should give up the company of those who indulge in sexuality. Too much culture of the softer feelings is harmful. We must not sleep too long or too short. The night meal should be spare; and we should not go to bed without at least half digesting it. It is a good habit to repeat the name of God and thus glide into sleep. Too much warm clothings should not be used. Nor should the body be unnecessarily tormented. But let us repeat, all these will avail little unless there is an all-absorbing passion for God in our heart. It is on the wings of that that we are to cross the morass of sexuality.

One should not be perturbed if there are nocturnal emissions. They do not much matter in the beginning. Let us push forward in spite of these. By and by as our mind will become calm

and pure, even these nocturnal emissions will become rare. But of course we should always be careful not to agitate our mind in any way. They produce bad dreams and it is necessary that we should have peaceful sleep. It is a good and very beneficial practice to observe partial or complete fast on the day after a nocturnal emission, praying

and thinking of God. This has a wonderful counter-effect.

To those who want directions for the success in their practice of *Brahmacharya*, our supreme advice is that they should practise regular *Sādhanā* and forget the body and the world in the thought of God. This is the only way to success, there is no other way.

## ASHTAVAKRA SAMHITA

By SWAMI NITYASWARUPANANDA

### CHAPTER XI

#### WISDOM

अष्टावक्र उवाच ।

भावाभावविकारश्च स्वभावादिति निश्चयी ।

निर्विकारो गतक्लेशः सुखेनैवोपशाम्यति ॥१॥

भावभावविकारः Existence, non-existence and change च (expletive) स्वभावात् from nature (जायते are) इति this निश्चयी one who has known for certain निर्विकारः unperturbed गतक्लेशः free from pain (सन् being) सुखेन easily एव (expletive) उपशाम्यति finds rest.

1. One who has realised that existence,<sup>1</sup> non-existence and change are in the nature of things, easily<sup>2</sup> finds repose, being unperturbed and free from pain.

[<sup>1</sup> Existence etc.—Everything exists, changes and is destroyed. This is the nature of everything. Nothing is permanent.]

[<sup>2</sup> Easily etc.—If one is impressed by the evanescent nature of things, one is no longer attached to them, and thus finds peace. All mental disturbance and pain are caused by our attachment to transitory objects.]

ईश्वरः सर्वनिर्माता नेहान्य इति निश्चयी ।

अन्तर्गलितसर्वाशः शान्तः कापि न सज्जते ॥२॥

ईश्वरः Brahman सर्वनिर्माता creator of all इह here अन्य other न not (अस्ति is) इति this निश्चयी one who has known for certain अन्तर्गलितसर्वाशः with all desires gone from within शान्तः calm (सन् being) कः कापि in anything whatsoever न not सज्जते is attached.

2. Knowing for certain that Brahman is the creator of all and that there is no other here,<sup>1</sup> one becomes peaceful<sup>2</sup> with all his desires set at rest within and is not attached to anything whatsoever.

[<sup>1</sup> Here—in the universe.]

[<sup>2</sup> Peaceful etc.—Desires arise from thinking that there are other things and existences outside oneself. We covet and want to enjoy them. But when we know that the universe

is made up of the Self (Brahman)—there is only Self and nothing else—and is created and controlled by the Self, that feeling of otherness goes and there is no desire and hence there is peace.]

आपदः सम्पदः काले दैवादेवेति निश्चयी ।

तुल्यः स्वस्थेन्द्रियो नित्यं न वाञ्छति न शोचति ॥३॥

काले In time आपदः adversities सम्पदः prosperities दैवात् through fate एव certainly (भवन्ति are) इति this निश्चयी one who has known for certain नित्यं ever तुल्यः contented स्वस्थेन्द्रियः with all the senses controlled (सन् being) न not वाञ्छति desires न not शोचति grieves (च and).

3. Knowing for certain that adversity and prosperity come in time through fate,<sup>1</sup> one is ever contented, has all his senses in control and does not desire<sup>2</sup> and grieve.<sup>3</sup>

[<sup>1</sup> Fate—the mysterious power of Karma.

Whoever realises that his present life with all its vicissitudes is the result of his past Karma, is not affected by the changes of fortune.

<sup>2</sup> Desire—for what is not attained.

<sup>3</sup> Grieve—for what is lost.]

सुखदुःखे जन्ममृत्यू दैवादेवेति निश्चयी ।

साध्यादर्शो निरायासः कुर्वन्नपि न लिप्यते ॥४॥

सुखदुःखे Happiness and misery जन्ममृत्यू birth and death दैवात् through fate एव certainly (भवन्ति are) इति this निश्चयी one who has known for certain साध्यादर्शो not finding it possible to accomplish निरायासः inactive (सन् being) कुर्वन् doing अपि even न not लिप्यते is attached.

4. Knowing for certain that happiness and misery, birth and death are due to one's fate,<sup>1</sup> one comes to see that it<sup>2</sup> is not possible to accomplish the desired things and thus becomes inactive<sup>3</sup> and is not<sup>4</sup> attached even though engaged in action.

[<sup>1</sup> Fate—past Karma.

<sup>2</sup> It etc.—As all that happen in life, are determined by past Karma, we are not free to do everything however desirable our objects.

<sup>3</sup> Inactive—internally.

<sup>4</sup> Not etc.—All actions do not necessarily entail bondage upon us. Only when they are performed with attachment and egoism, they do so. But having transcended the ego and all attachment through the realisation of the Self, a man can easily be engaged in action and yet remain unattached and free.]

चिन्तया जायते दुःखं नान्यथेहेति निश्चयी ।

तथा हीनः सुखी शान्तः सर्वत्र गलितस्पृहः ॥५॥

इह Here दुःखं misery चिन्तया through care जायते is produced न not अन्यथा other-wise इति this निश्चयी one who has known for certain तथा हीनः devoid of that सुखी happy शान्तः peaceful सर्वत्र everywhere गलितस्पृहः rid of desires (भवति is).

5. One who has realised that care<sup>1</sup> breeds misery in this world and nothing else, becomes free from it, and is happy, peaceful and rid<sup>2</sup> of desires everywhere.

[<sup>1</sup> *Care etc.*—The preceding two verses indicate that suffering comes through *Karma* and is thus inevitable. If, however, we can detach our mind from it when it comes, it will not affect us. By dwelling on it, we intensify it.

<sup>2</sup> *Rid etc.*—One who is detached, gets rid of desires.]

नाहं देहो न मे देहो बोधोऽहमिति निश्चयी ।

कैवल्यमिव संप्राप्तो न स्मरत्यकृतं कृतम् ॥६॥

अहं I देहः body न not मे my देहः body न not अहं I बोधः Intelligence इति this निश्चयी one who has realised कैवल्यं the state of Absoluteness संप्राप्तः attained इव as if अकृतं what is not done कृतं what is done न not स्मरति remembers.

6. He who has realised that he is not the body, that the body is not his and that he is Intelligence itself, does<sup>1</sup> not remember what he has done or not done as<sup>2</sup> if he has attained the state of Absoluteness.

[<sup>1</sup> *Does etc.*—Work pertains to body and mind alone and not to Self. He who has attained Supreme Knowledge, does not identify himself with the body and mind. Therefore he has no connection with any work. He does not think of what he has done and what he has not done, as ordinary people do.

<sup>2</sup> *As etc.*—For the fruit of the realisation of Self while in the body is the same as it will be after the destruction of the body.]

आब्रह्मस्तम्बपर्यन्तमहमेवेति निश्चयी ।

निर्विकल्पः शुचिः शान्तः प्राप्ताप्राप्तविनिवृत्तः ॥७॥

आब्रह्मस्तम्बपर्यन्तं From Brahmâ down to the clump of grass अहं I एव verily (अस्मि am) इति this निश्चयी one who knows for certain निर्विकल्पः free from conflict शुचिः pure शान्तः peaceful प्राप्ताप्राप्तविनिवृत्तः turned away from what is attained and not attained (भवति is).

7. "It<sup>1</sup> is verily I from Brahmâ down to the clump of grass,"—one who knows this for certain, becomes free<sup>2</sup> from the conflict of thought, pure<sup>3</sup> and peaceful and turns<sup>4</sup> away from what is attained and not attained.

[<sup>1</sup> *It etc.*—i.e., I am everything, the universal existence.]

<sup>2</sup> *Free etc.*—Because mental determination or indetermination is impossible for him who is the cosmic existence itself. He has nothing to determine about.

<sup>3</sup> *Pure*—Attachment begets impurity; but attachment is not possible for such a one as is mentioned in the first note.

<sup>4</sup> *Turns etc.*—Because there is then nothing to attain. Only the One exists.]

नानाश्चर्यमिदं विश्वं न किञ्चिदिति निश्चयी ।

निर्वासनः स्फूर्तिमात्रो न किञ्चिदिव शाम्यति ॥८॥

इदं This नाना manifold अश्चर्यं wonderful विश्वं universe न not किञ्चित् anything इति this निश्चयी one who knows for certain निर्वासनः free from desire स्फूर्तिमात्रः Intelligence itself (सत् being) किञ्चित् anything न not (अस्ति exists) इव as if शाम्यति finds peace.

8. One who knows for certain that this manifold and wonderful universe is nothing, becomes desireless and pure<sup>1</sup> Intelligence, and finds peace as<sup>2</sup> if nothing exists.

[<sup>1</sup> *Pure etc.*—Because then there will be no relative knowledge, the mind refusing to relate itself to phenomena.

<sup>2</sup> *As etc.*—Though while living in the body, he may perceive the existence of the universe, yet his inner peace will be that of the absolute state in which nothing but the Self exists.]

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

The two letters that we publish this month conclude the present series of *Unpublished Letters of Swami Vivekananda*. May the blessing contained in the last letter prove true also in our lives! We are glad to inform that we have been able to secure some unpublished utterances of the Swami on Jnana Yoga. We shall publish them serially from the beginning of next year. . . . *The Diary of a Disciple* will be continued next year. . . . PRAMATHA NATH BOSE, B.Sc. (LONDON), who contributes *The Brahmacharya System of Education* to the present member does not require any further introduction at our hands. Our readers have lately perused in the pages of *Prabuddha Bharata* a series of very interesting articles by this well-known and experienced writer on the cultural and socio-economic conditions of India. We are glad to inform that Mr. Bose has lately brought out a book—*Swaraj, Cultural and Political*—in which all those chapters in addition to many others have been included. The book will amply repay perusal. It can be had of Newmans, Calcutta. His present article is an independent one. . . . . Another article on Sri Ramakrishna, *The Call of the Disciples*, by ROMAIN ROLLAND is published in the present issue. We shall publish a series of articles on Swami Vivekananda by this great writer next year. . . . M. H. SYED, B.A., L.T., the writer of *Is the Bhagavad Gita only a Scripture of Yoga?* is a professor in the Oriental Department of the Allahabad Univer-

sity. Though a Muhammadan, his knowledge of Hindu philosophy and religion is deep and his attitude towards them reverential. This little article, we are sure, will be appreciated by our readers. . . . *Politico-Economic Reconstruction of India* by A SEEKER OF TRUTH is concluded in the present issue. . . . We invite the careful attention of the readers to the Appeal by R. K. Mission, which we publish at the end of the present issue. Neither the cause for which funds have been invited nor the body that has called for them requires any comments at our hands. We believe and hope that the Appeal will not be in vain.

### Conquest of Fear

In course of an article which Bertrand Russel recently contributed to *The Forum* (New York) and *The Realist* (London) on his philosophy of life, he arrives at certain conclusions about the ways and means of reaching international and social amity: "The road to Utopia is clear; it lies partly through politics and partly through changes in the individual. As for politics, for the most important thing is the establishment of an international government—a measure which I expect to be brought about through the world government of the United States. As for the individual, the problem is to make him less prone to hatred and fear, and this is a matter partly physiological, and partly psychological. Much of the hatred in the world springs

from bad digestion and inadequate functioning of the glands, which is a result of oppression and thwarting in youth. In a world where the health of the young is adequately cared for and their vital impulses are given the utmost scope compatible with their own health and that of their companions, men and women will grow up more courageous and less malevolent than they are at present."

And Mr. Russel thus explains the presence of fear and hatred in human society: "In the presence of a new stimulus there may be an impulse of approach or an impulse of retreat. Translated into psychological terms, this may be expressed by saying that there may be an emotion of attraction or an emotion of fear. Both, of course, are necessary to survival, but emotions of fear are very much less necessary for survival in civilized life than they were at earlier stages of human development or among our prehuman ancestors. Before men had adequate weapons, fierce wild beasts must have made life very dangerous, so that men had reason to be as timorous as rabbits are now, and there was an ever-present danger of death by starvation, which has grown enormously less with the creation of modern means of transport. At the present time the fiercest and most dangerous animal with which human beings have to contend is man, and the dangers arising from purely physical causes have been very rapidly reduced. In the present day, therefore, fear finds little scope except in relation to other human beings, and fear itself is one of the main reasons why human beings are formidable to each other. It is a recognized maxim that the best defence is attack; consequently people are continually attacking each other because they expect to be attacked. Our instinctive emotions are those that we have inherited from a much more dangerous world, and contain, therefore, a larger proportion of fear than they should; this fear, since it finds little outlet elsewhere, directs

itself against the social environment, producing distrust and hate, envy, malice, and all uncharitableness."

There is, of course, much truth in what we have quoted above. But in our opinion, neither the analysis of fear nor the remedy proposed is profound enough. Mr. Russel's view-point is essentially, if not wholly, naturalistic. Not everything, however, can be explained naturalistically. Fear has its root much deeper than in the past history. The Upanishad says that it is out of the sense of duality that fear grows. Wherever there is the consciousness of duality, there must be fear, conscious or subconscious. Duality rises out of individuality which is limitation. Limitation implies exclusiveness. We know little of what is outside us. This ignorance is at the root of all fear. Besides, our individuality makes us cling to our characteristics; whereas outside beings and circumstances are continually impinging on and modifying or destroying them. This conflict also begets fear. Fear, therefore, is concomitant with individuality. If our explanation of fear is not the same as Mr. Russel's, the remedy that we propose is also different from his prescription. Mr. Russel aims at producing splendid animals. It may be that if the vital impulses are given utmost scope, we may have courageous animals. But man is not merely or even essentially a vital being. He is much more than that. There is an inherent aspiration in him to realise the spiritual self. This yearning cannot be denied. And this, it has been found from immemorial experience, is in direct conflict with the merely or mainly vital existence.

It would be manifestly wrong to say that we have nothing to gain by Mr. Russel's prescription. There is no doubt that by ensuring a healthy vital existence, we shall improve the conditions of men to a certain extent. But the main problem will remain unsolved unless we propose a remedy which will be in accordance with both the spiritual

aspirations of men and the ultimate analysis of fear and the allied emotions. Such a remedy lies in stimulating the spiritual impulse in man. There is the utmost need of our becoming more and more spiritual if we would get rid of fear and hatred and ensure a sound stable life. There is no other way. All other means can but be subsidiary. *We must get rid of individuality; we must become universal.* Of course, physically that is impossible. Mentally also, there will always be some limitations and exclusiveness. Only *spiritually*, by transcending the limitations of individuality, can we become one with all. The more we advance that way, the more we shall be rid of fear and hatred. Rightly has the transcendental realisation been called *Abhayam*, fearlessness. In this also lies the lasting satisfaction of the human mind and life.

### Sri Ramakrishna and Keshab Chandra Sen

It is necessary to say a few words in refutation of the charges that M. Romain Rolland has brought against the followers of Sri Ramakrishna in his last month's article. The substance of the charges is that the followers of Sri Ramakrishna claim Keshab to be one of his disciples whereas "it is not true to say that anyone of his (Keshab's) essential ideas was derived from him (Sri Ramakrishna), for they were already formed when he met Ramakrishna for the first time." At the outset let us say that none of us look upon Keshab as a disciple (as the word is usually understood) of Sri Ramakrishna. M. Rolland has regretted that we have given a partial account of the relations between Sri Ramakrishna and Keshab. We beg to state that it was not necessary for us to go into details, for Keshab's intimate associates themselves,—Pratap Ch. Mazoomdar, Girish Ch. Sen, Chiranjib Sarma and others—have left clear statements about them, and we have simply relied on

them. M. Rolland has rejected the testimonies of those gentlemen. But we still hold that these are correct and authentic.

Is it true that Keshab did not derive any ideas from Sri Ramakrishna and had formed all his ideas before he met Sri Ramakrishna? We do not think that there is enough evidence in favour of this inference. Keshab's mature thought found expression in what he called the New Dispensation. Had Keshab conceived it before he met Sri Ramakrishna? There are at least three important elements of that thought: worship of God as Mother; recognition of all religions and prophets as true; and the assimilation of Hindu polytheism into Brahmoism. M. Rolland observes that Keshab did not require Sri Ramakrishna's help to arrive at the conception of the Mother; the idea was not created by Sri Ramakrishna. Quite true. But there is a world of difference between the *knowledge* of an idea and the *acceptance* of it; and Keshab's mere knowledge of the idea of the Motherhood of God did not prove that in Keshab's *acceptance* of that idea Sri Ramakrishna had no influence. Why did Keshab reject the idea when he became a Brahmo? And why did he afterwards accept it again? What was the decisive factor in this reacceptance? M. Rolland mentions that the Adi Brahmo Samaj had accepted the idea of God's Motherhood, and Keshab himself had referred to it in 1866 and 1875. But it cannot be denied that such references were extremely rare and casual. It was only about 1879 that Keshab's worship of God as Mother became earnest and deep. The question naturally arises: What made this change in Keshab? What was the reason? We claim that it was the example and influence of Sri Ramakrishna.

We shall give only two quotations in confirmation of our view. Pratap Ch. Mazoomdar, referring to Sri Ramakrishna's meeting with Keshab, says

(in his *Life of Keshab Ch. Sen*): "Keshab's own trials and sorrows about the time of the Cooch Behar marriage\* had spontaneously suggested to him the necessity of regarding God as Mother. In his devotional colloquies he often addressed the Deity in various forms of the word Mother. And now the sympathy, friendship, and example of the Paramahansa converted the Motherhood of God into a subject of special culture with him. The greater part of the year 1879 witnessed this development. It became altogether a new feature of the Revival which Keshab was specially bringing about." On February 1, 1880, Keshab wrote in *The Sunday Mirror*: "Let our readers accept the cheering message. A New Dispensation has come down upon the Brahmo Samaj which proclaims a new programme to India. Its chief merit is its freshness, and its one watchword is—God, the Mother of India . . . all its changes are rung upon that single word—God Mother." (This extract shows that Keshab himself considered the idea of the worship of God as Mother as a new feature with the Brahmo Samaj in 1880).

As regards the harmony of the great religions such as Hinduism, Christianity, etc., and the harmony of the different sectarian aspects of Hinduism, we hold that in these respects also Keshab was profoundly influenced by Sri Ramakrishna. M. Rolland's statements as regards these have been vitiated by wrong dates. In the previous article (*Builders of Unity*) he has written that Keshab went on a missionary tour in 1873, during which he believed he found the key to the popular polytheism; and that Keshab began to proclaim the New Dispensation in 1875. Both these are wrong dates. Keshab proclaimed the New Dispensation not in 1875, but on the 25th January, 1880. In order to be

quite sure on this point, we wrote to the editor of *Nava-Vidhan*, the organ of the New Dispensation Church. He gave us this date. It is true Keshab used the words *New Dispensation* in his lecture, *Behold the Light of Heaven in India*, which he delivered in 1875. But the lecture itself contained little or nothing of the teaching that came to be proclaimed later on as the New Dispensation. It was mainly devoted to a consideration of a few theistic similarities between the Jews and the Hindus, and the Christians and the Hindus, and voiced the expectation that the New Dispensation, without denying the older religions, will fulfil them,—it was a *special* revelation of God in that critical period of India's history. This was no harmony of religions. M. Rolland mentions Keshab's lecture on *The Future Church* delivered in 1869 as another proof of Keshab's early conception of the harmony of religions. The lecture was not devoted to a visualization of all religions as a vast symphony, wherein each one while keeping its distinctive character, united to praise God. But Keshab "spoke of this Church as the one in which the prevailing religions of the land, Hinduism and Mohammedanism, would coalesce and form one religion under the guiding influence of Christianity." This, it must be admitted, is far from the harmony of religions, even as Keshab afterwards conceived it. Our opinion is that Keshab was always more or less eclectic. Every founder of new religious schools is eclectic to some extent, unless he is extremely fanatical or original; for he has to accommodate the already proved religious truths in his new religion. Keshab was of course somewhat more than merely that. But till he met Sri Ramakrishna and watched him practising harmony of religions, he did not possess a clear idea of how to conceive and formulate it properly. Had it not been so, why did not Keshab proclaim the harmony of religions earlier than 1880?

\* Which, by the way, took place in 1878. It is good to remember that Sri Ramakrishna and Keshab met in 1875.



Pratap Ch. Mazoomdar has left us a clear account of how the New Dispensation came to be proclaimed. After the schism in his Church as a result of the Cooch Behar marriage and due to the persecutions to which he was subjected and the sufferings caused thereby, he felt the need of a revival. According to Pratap: "One evening while Keshab lay in bed, and we had proceeded far into the excitement of such a talk, he suddenly got up and said, there must be a great and unprecedented Revival, if the Brahmo Samaj is to tide over the present crisis. In devotions, disciplines, doctrines and missionary activities, there should be introduced, all along the line such a spirit of Revival as had never yet been seen. We all concurred in the idea, but we did not perceive that what Keshab said was the result of long intense meditation and much earnest prayer, that it boded a kind of activity for which none was prepared." Pratap adds: "When therefore Keshub spoke of a Revival in 1879, he meant a further advance, a greater advance than had been ever made before, *on the lines of a new revelation, a new life, altogether a new departure.*" (Mark the words italicised by us). Keshab had not conceived the harmony of religions before he met Sri Ramakrishna, but understood and proclaimed (in his own way, it is true) after some five years of intimate association with him who was the brightest example and exponent of that principle. What conclusion can we draw from this? Is it not legitimate to conclude that Keshab's acceptance and preaching of the harmony of religions was due to Sri Ramakrishna's influence? That it is so, is confirmed by what Pratap Ch. Mazoomdar himself writes in his *Life of Keshab Ch. Sen*. After describing Sri Ramakrishna's harmony of the broad religions as well as the different Hindu creeds, he says: "This strange eclecticism suggested to Keshub's appreciative mind the thought of broad-

ening the spiritual structure of his own movement." We have also the indirect witness of the editor of *Nava-Vidhan*. He wrote to us: "Undoubtedly the declaration of the New Dispensation in 1880 is the self-expression of the New Birth that came in him—birth that came after long travails, and every new birth in him had for its necessary conditions the influence of many characters. And what is Keshab, if he is not the spirit of perpetual discipleship? . . ."

Therefore there is not the least doubt, as regards Keshab's acceptance of Hindu polytheism also, that it was due to Sri Ramakrishna's influence. We have already said that M. Rolland's mention of the year 1873 as the year when Keshab came to understand the significance of Hindu polytheism is incorrect. It was, according to Pratap Ch. Mazoomdar, in the year 1879, towards the end of which he again went on a missionary tour. We have already quoted Pratap as stating that Sri Ramakrishna's "eclecticism" had influenced Keshab. Pratap adds a few sentences after: "In his Bengali sermons about this time (1879-1880), he accordingly took up Hindu gods and goddesses by name, and explained the idea that underlay each." And as M. Rolland himself has mentioned, Keshab wrote his article on *The Philosophy of Idol-worship* on August 1, 1880 in *The Sunday Mirror*. The witness of our kind correspondent, the editor of *Nava-Vidhan*, is still more conclusive. To our query on the point, he has replied: "I do not know of any of his utterances and writings of pre-New Dispensation days, where he interpreted Hindu image-worship."

Our conclusion is, therefore, that Keshab Ch. Sen was a great soul possessing a great religious genius with an inborn tendency towards eclecticism, it was because of this that he could appreciate Sri Ramakrishna so much; but that his association with Sri Ramakrishna made him develop his eclectic outlook in the way that he did in his

New Dispensation, and that as regards the Motherhood of God and Hindu polytheism, his assimilation of these

two ideas was more directly due to Sri Ramakrishna's example and influence.

## REVIEW

**THE CROSS IN THE CRUCIBLE.** By S. Haldar, Ranchi. 378+ix pp. Price cloth Rs. 2, paper Re. 1/4.

The present book by the author of *The Lure of the Cross* is the outcome of a critical and reactionary spirit against the Christian Missionary activities in India. As the name of the book implies, he puts the "cross" in the "crucible" and finds that it cannot stand,—here "Christianity has been carefully weighed in the balance and has been found hopelessly wanting."

The book opens with the following quotation from Bertrand Russell: "I say quite deliberately that the Christian religion as organised in its Churches, has been and still is the principal enemy of moral progress in the world" and this in a way forms the theme of the book. The propositions enunciated by the author are as follow:

(1) That many facts of the Bible melt away before the light of modern science. If Christianity depends on the Biblical truths for its basis, that basis is very weak.

(2) That Jehovah, the God of the Old Testament, is a God of vengeance, hatred and partiality.

(3) That "the perfection of the character of Jesus is by no means established by primary evidence." That many are likely to be outraged by certain aspects of Christ's conduct and by some of his teachings as recorded in the New Testament.

(4) That "the general level of Biblical morality is very low."

(5) The "Old Testament does not present a high ideal of womanhood." "The New Testament too does not assign a very high place to woman."

(6) Christianity has from the beginning allied itself with ignorance and proscribed the light of reason.

(7) That the doctrine of exclusive salvation is untenable. "Moral supremacy is the logical corollary of the theory of exclusive salvation." But the "Church as a moral agent has proved a failure." This is evident from how the Christian powers behaved in the last Great War, and also from their

general attitude towards and inhuman persecution of the weaker races. Other facts also go to prove the above statement.

(8) That the Christian missionaries have become the cause of great evil to the world. They have been associated from the remote past with acts which seem staggering to the modern people. "Almost all our 'little wars' have sprung from the enterprise of the missionaries." "It is impossible to ignore the fact that English missionaries are a source of political unrest and frequently of international trouble, subversive of national institutions of a country in which they reside." (The author quotes from Lord Curzon). "The missionary is everywhere and always the pioneer of trade." We have seen in the last war how "the representatives of the Prince of Peace—priests, pastors, bishops—they go into battle in their thousands to carry out, musket in hand, the Divine commands: Thou shalt not kill, and Love one another."

The author has pleaded his case well. Some of his arguments are irresistible, and he has quoted as authority great European savants, famous political thinkers down to what appeared in any obscure magazine in India. The author has laboured hard and spared no pains to make his points convincing. But this also cannot be denied that some of his interpretations are on the very face of them distorted; and some of his remarks will seem as blasphemous to Christians as many criticisms of Hinduism by Christian missionaries seem to the Hindus. Is the author paying them in their own coin? In spite of all he has said, none will believe that there is nothing good in Christianity and the character of Jesus Christ. Really there is no religion in which there is no defect and there is no religion which has not produced persons who are the salt of the earth. We cannot say that the Christian missionaries have done nothing but harm to us. There were some Christian missionaries whose names are still remembered with gratitude by the country.

The value of the book would have been greatly enhanced if it were written free

from prejudice and passion. The book will be a delight to those who want to see Christianity discredited and profitable-reading to those who are too much in love with the faith of the ruling race.

**VIVEKANANDA THE NATION-BUILDER.** By *Swami Avyaktananda*. *Ramakrishna Ashrama, Bankipore, Patna.* 139 pp. Price Re. 1/-.

Swami Vivekananda's message has a universal as well as a national significance. Though an apostle of world-religion and world-culture, he was pre-eminently a national hero. The thought of India was uppermost in his mind. He was the first modern Indian to realise her oneness through the diversities of caste, colour and creed and the continuity of the same from remote past to distant future. Not only was he a preacher of nationality, but an embodiment of her collective consciousness.

The book under review is an admirable attempt to bring out in considerable detail the import of the Swami's nationalism. The author, a monk of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Order, has had ample opportunities to commune with the brother-monks and the disciples of Swami Vivekananda to fill up certain gaps in his knowledge of the Swami derived from his works and bio-

ographies. The book is a reprint, with necessary additions and alterations, from *The Morning Star*, a weekly journal edited by the author. It deals in a clear style with all the aspects of our national life, social, political and religious, and sets down a *modus operandi* for its reconstruction. The social and political systems of Ancient India have been beautifully outlined by the author to illustrate the Swami's ideals and methods. He has also brought to bear upon the subject his wide study of the socio-political history of India and other countries. Authoritative accounts have been cited to corroborate the views set forth and to bring into clear relief the relative values of Eastern and Western national ideals.

The book is a valuable contribution to the study of present-day nationalism. We commend it to the careful perusal of all who are interested in the work of India's regeneration. Our national workers are deeply influenced by the socio-political ideas of the West, the inadequacy of which is being recognised by the best thinkers of the day. The time is ripe when they should veer round to the ideal set up by Swami Vivekananda. The book stimulates thought and encourages action. May it inspire the reader with the Swami's spirit! The printing and the get-up are excellent.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### Ramakrishna Mission, Ceylon Branch

Several centres of the Ramakrishna Mission have for some years past been existing in Ceylon at Jaffna, Trincomalee and Batticaloa and doing excellent work. But a legal difficulty has all along been existing. The Ramakrishna Mission has its jurisdiction only within India. In order, therefore, to give the Ceylon work of the Mission a legal status, a bill was introduced in the Ceylon Legislative Council sometime back. The bill has since been passed, and now an Ordinance has been issued to incorporate the Ramakrishna Mission (Ceylon Branch). It has received the Governor's assent and the date of commencement is July 17, 1929. According to the Ordinance passed, the Ceylon Branch of the Ramakrishna Mission will have a Board of Management of which the President and the

Vice-President shall be nominated by the President of the Ramakrishna Mission at Belur, near Calcutta. The Ordinance also ensures that the principles and policy of the Ceylon Branch should be governed by the Governing Body of the Ramakrishna Mission in India whose voice thereon shall be final.

We hope in its new status, the Ceylon work will flourish greatly.

### Sri Ramakrishna Samaj, Cuddapah

The 19th anniversary of the local Ramakrishna Samaj was celebrated with great eclat on the 21st and 22nd September last. Swami Yatiswarananda, President of the Ramakrishna Math, Madras, laid the foundation stone of an extension to the main buildings of the Samaj and delivered several inspiring lectures. The new buildings of

the Depressed Class Labourers' Free Night School recently built by the Samaj were also opened on this occasion.

**Vedanta Centre,  
St. Louis, U.S.A.**

The Secretary of the St. Louis Vedanta Society has sent us the following report:

This Centre was the outgrowth of the very splendid lectures given us during the stay of Swami Prabhavananda in St. Louis in October, 1927. Before leaving, Swami Prabhavananda appointed the Executive Officers, and gave us instructions about organizing. After he left, a Constitution and By-Laws were drawn up; notices were sent out early in January, 1928, to those who had signified their desire to become members of the Society, and the Constitution was adopted. Eighteen came forward to sign, and we were officially a part of the Mission.

As we had no resident teacher, Swami Prabhavananda said that for the time being, our President, Mr. O. Wade Fallert, should take charge of the meetings, instructing the members according to Vedanta Philosophy. In selecting Mr. Fallert for the office of President, the Swami builded better than he knew. Divine Mother had been most gracious in guiding into our midst one who was most ably qualified to assume the position of teacher *pro tem*. Even those of us who had known Mr. Fallert for years little realized the extent and depth of his training along these spiritual lines.

At that time, we did not know how long it would be until we received a resident teacher. Dealing with persons of unequal spiritual development, many of them entire strangers to him, Mr. Fallert decided to begin with fundamental principles of Vedanta Philosophy. A lecture on the Seven Principles of Man was the first, followed by such subjects as Life in India; Introduction to Raja Yoga; Karma Yoga; Effect of Karma on Character; Karma Yoga: The Greatness of Each in His Own Place; The Secret of Work; What is Duty?; We Help Ourselves, not the World; Non-Attachment; Freedom.

When there was still no teacher in sight, other discourses were given on such subjects as Teachings of Vedanta Philosophy; Inner Teachings of Hindu Philosophy; Prana; Psychic Prana; Karma Yoga; Bhakti Yoga; four lectures on Jnana Yoga; Dharma; Spiritual Consciousness; four

lectures on The Voice of the Silence; Involution; Evolution; Ascent of Man; Metempsychosis; Spiritual Evolution. It will be observed that some of the lectures deal with scientific matters; it has been the special mission of Mr. Fallert to show the steady progress of scientific research toward absolute knowledge, and to interpret Eastern teachings in terms of Western phraseology and thought.

It has been a rare privilege to those attending the lectures to listen to such profound utterances,—a veritable feast of reason and flow of soul. However, outside of the time and energy given to the preparation of these lectures, Mr. Fallert is a very busy man, and must have some recreation in order that he may be fit for the heavy work ushered in with the advent of Fall. For that reason, as it was also last year, the meetings closed on Friday, July 19.

The attendance during this time varied, with nine as the lowest and twenty-four as the highest. Extremes of temperature such as blizzard of winter and torrid heat of summer account for the divergence, although new faces are to be seen at all of the meetings, with a nucleus of steady attendants. There has been a profound atmosphere of spirituality at all of the meetings; and by his loving and conscientious efforts, the way has been paved, and Mr. Fallert has shed Light on the Path for those of us who are striving toward greater Spiritual unfoldment.

**R. K. Mission Sevashrama,  
Brindaban**

The above Sevashrama completed its twenty-second year of useful service in 1928. During the year the number of patients treated at the Indoor Hospital was 270, of whom 229 were cured, 33 passed away, 4 left treatment and 4 remained in the Hospital at the end of the year. At the Outdoor Dispensary were treated 31,291 patients of whom 10,046 were new cases. A new Cholera Ward was added to the Sevashrama during the year. Besides medical aid the Sevashrama also renders financial help whenever possible. It spent Rs. 107/- in helping five respectable but helpless *pardnashin* ladies. During the year under review the total income was Rs. 7,241-4-3 and the total expenditure Rs. 6,277-13-3.

The needs of the Sevashrama are: (1) A general ward for male indoor patients costing

Rs. 7,000/-. (2) An outdoor dispensary building with an operation theatre, separate dispensing rooms for Allopathic and Homeopathic sections and a store room for medicines, the cost of which has been estimated at Rs. 10,000/-. (3) A guest house at a cost of Rs. 6,000/-. (4) A phthisis ward at a cost of Rs. 2,000/-. (5) A bathing ghat

and a protective wall at a cost of Rs. 10,000/-.

Contributions, however small, will be thankfully received and acknowledged by (i) *The President, Ramakrishna Mission, P.O. Belur Math, Dt. Howrah, Bengal; or* (ii) *The Hony. Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama, Brindaban, Muttra, U.P.*

### Mass Education : Ramakrishna Mission's Appeal

The Secretary of the Ramakrishna Mission sends out the following appeal :

The value of education as a powerful factor in the building up of a nation is well-known to all thinking people. The civilised countries of the world owe their present enviable position to the extensive spread of education. And the United States of America tops the list because she has made education universal in the country. Our country presents a sad contrast to this. Witness, as a result, the depths of degradation to which our masses have sunk. They are always poor, because they do not know how to improve their material condition. They are constantly ill and die premature deaths, because they lack proper food and clothing and are entirely ignorant of the laws of health. They are an easy prey to superstitions and are at the mercy of every quack and impostor that chooses to lay his hand on them. They cannot distinguish between what is good for them and what brings about their ruin. The condition of their women, in particular, is most deplorable. They are the very picture of helplessness in its most pitiable aspect. No man can realise their suffering ; to do this he is to be a woman. And as everybody knows, child mortality in India is appalling. To make a long story short, the Indian masses are living in a condition that is inhuman, heart-rending and utterly unworthy of any civilized society.

This state of things must be immediately stopped. The Indian masses are also human beings and as such it is the duty of everyone of us to set them on their feet. Our religion preaches the immanence of God in all beings. It will be the highest kind of worship if we try to help these millions of mute, suffering men, women and children—our own countrymen, brethren. It is the worship of the Living God. Swami Vivekananda spoke again and again in glowing terms of the need of mass education as a solvent for the country's problems. It will interest the public to know that in addition to our other activities we have been able to start some sixty-five schools, mostly primary, some of which also impart technical instructions. What we now want is, among other things, to add at least a hundred primary schools as soon as the necessary funds be forthcoming. It is upon the secure foundations of education that the structure of national well-being rests. In the name of our suffering millions we appeal to our generous countrymen for funds to carry out this educational work. We are confident that our appeal will meet with a prompt response. Contributions, however small, will be thankfully received and acknowledged at the following addresses: (1) *The President, Ramakrishna Mission, Belur Math, Howrah, Bengal.* (2) *The Manager, Advaita Ashrama, 182A, Mukhtaram Babu Street, Calcutta.* (3) *The Manager, Udbodhan Office, 1, Mukherjee Lane, Baghbazar, Calcutta.*

**Erratum :** September Supplement, p. iii, 2nd column, 3rd line from bottom : "A. K. Guha" should be "A. K. Gune, Homeopathic Practitioner, Kolhapur City."

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